CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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INDIA-US TRADE FEAT

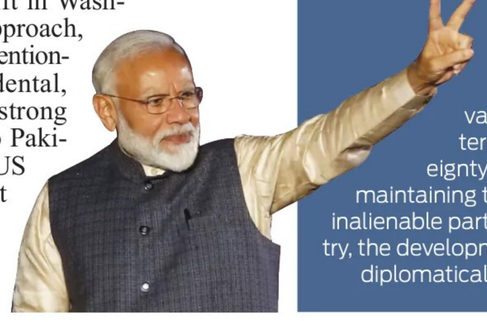
PoK slips out of Pak hands?

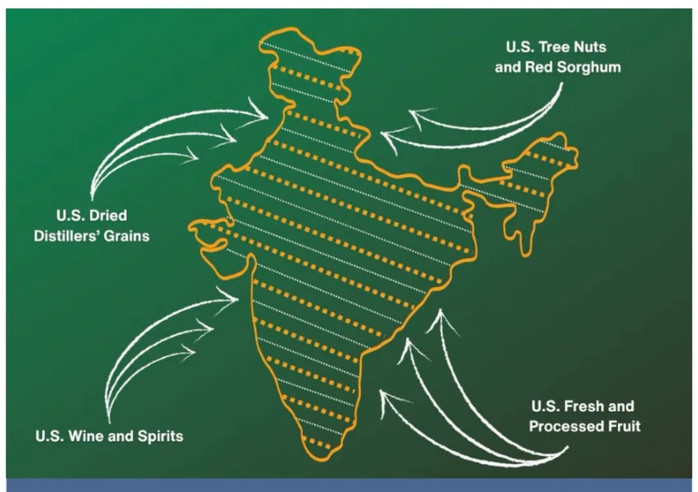
US shares map showing entire J&K, Aksai Chin as part of India; Pak red-faced

NEW DELHI

The India-US trade pact announcement made on Saturday could be troubling news for Pakistan not only because Delhi got a better deal when it comes to tariffs but also because it serves as a huge diplomatic blow to Islamabad. Alongside the trade announcement, the office of the US Trade Representative shared a map depicting the entire Jammu and Kashmir region, including Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), as part of India. The map also showed Aksai Chin as part of India. Aksai Chin, a high-altitude region in eastern Ladakh under Chinese control since 1962, has consistently been claimed by India as its sovereign territory. The broader message from the US is straightforward: Pakistan may remain on its radar, especially in areas such as rare earth minerals and defence equipment sales, but there is no real alternative to India as a global partner.

While India's sovereignty over these regions has never depended on US recognition, the map signals a notable shift in Washington's approach, whether intentional or accidental, sending a strong message to Pakistan about US alignment with India's territorial claims





Why this US map matters

The US showing Aksai Chin and PoK as part of India marks a clear shift from earlier US representations. Traditionally, maps released by the US government or the State Department have included disclaimers or demarcations acknowledging competing territorial claims, particularly in regions such as J&K and eastern Ladakh. While India has never sought external validation of its territorial sovereignty, consistently maintaining that J&K is an inalienable part of the country, the development remains diplomatically significant.

Reset in India-US ties?

The timing of the development is also notable. India-US have been recalibrating their relationship under the unpredictable leadership of Trump, following a turbulent phase marked by trade disputes. At one point, Trump imposed a steep 50% tariff on Indian goods, the highest among US allies. Under the newly-announced trade pack, that tariff has now been reduced to 18%, the lowest among Asian nations, underscoring a broader reset in bilateral ties.

MAJOR SHOCKER FOR ASIM MUNIR, SHEHBAZ SHARIF

Over the past six months, Pakistan's diplomatic engagement with the US has intensified significantly, led largely by its military leadership. Army Chief General Asim Munir has visited the US three times during this period and has held two meetings with US President Donald Trump, including a widely publicised lunch in June. Notably, this marked the first instance of a US President meeting Pakistan's army chief alone, without the presence of any civilian leadership from Islamabad.

India trusted partner for growth: PM

KUALA LUMPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is seen as a "trusted partner for growth" and it was reflected in the recent trade deals with various countries.

Addressing a community programme here, he said the Indian diaspora continues to serve as a strong bridge between India and Malaysia. Referring to the trade deals India agreed with various countries, the PM said India is seen as a "trusted partner for growth". "Trust has become India's strongest currency," he said, citing trade deals with the UK, UAE, Australia, New Zealand, Oman, the EU and the US. Both India and Malaysia know each other very well and it must be due to a large number of common words between Indian languages and Malay, he said. "I am grateful for the warmth of the Indian diaspora in Kuala Lumpur. Our diaspora continues to serve as a strong bridge between India and Malaysia," he said.

He said Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim, who was present at the event, and he have been friends even before the former became the PM.

BJP's Ritu to be Mumbai mayor, Shiv Sena loses post after 25 yrs

MUMBAI

The BJP is set to install its first mayor in Mumbai, ending the Shiv Sena's 25-year dominance in the civic body, with party corporator Ritu Tawde filing her nomination for the poll to the top post on Saturday.

Shiv Sena, the saffron party's ally in the Mahayuti, has declared Sanjay Shankar Ghadi as its candidate for the deputy mayor's post.

Ghadi will be the Deputy Mayor and will serve for 15 months. The Shiv Sena will split the deputy mayor's term to give the opportunity to four of its corporators.

In the 227-member civic body, the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 89 seats, while Shiv Sena won 29 seats. The ruling alliance, with a combined strength of 118 corporators, is past the halfway mark of 114.

CM, DyCM to launch ₹200 cr Benni Halla work

Hubballi: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and a host of ministers are expected to attend the initiation of ₹200 crore Benni Halla Flood Control Project, which is aimed at mitigating the losses farmers faced during recurring flash floods in the stream during rainy season. The foundation stone laying ceremony will be held at Shiraguppi in Hubballi taluk of Dharwad district on Sunday.

Earlier Navalgund MLA NH Konaraddi said that the ₹200 crore project had been prepared as per the recommendations of the G Paramashivaiah Committee on preventing flash floods and mitigating the losses.

Explosives seized from onion-laden lorry in Kerala

MALAPPURAM

Over 10,500 gelatin sticks and detonators were seized from a lorry carrying onions at Chemmad in Kerala's Malappuram on Saturday, police said.

Police have taken a woman, who owns the lorry into custody, an officer said. Around 245 boxes containing over 10,500 gelatin sticks, detonators and wires were recovered from a lorry parked at a bricks manufacturing unit. Officials at the Tirurangadi police station said the onion-laden lorry had reached the bricks manufacturing unit late on Friday night.

Following a tip-off, cops reached the spot, after which those who were unloading the goods from the lorry fled.

SRI SIDDARAMAIAH
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

Water Resources Department
Karnataka Neeravari Nigama Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)

LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE FOR
BENNEHALLI FLOOD CONTROL WORKS
AND INAUGURATION, BHOOMIPOOJA PROGRAMME OF VARIOUS WORKS
IN NAVALGUND VIDHANA SABHA CONSTITUENCY

SRI D.K. SHIVAKUMAR
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

Date: 08-02-2026 | Time: 3:00 PM
Venue: Shiraguppi, Hubblli Taluk, Dharward District

Laying of Foundation Stone
SRI SIDDARAMAIAH
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka

In the August Presence of
SRI BASAVARAJ S HORATTI
Hon'ble Chairman
Karnataka Legislative Council

SRI D.K. SHIVAKUMAR
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Water Resources, Bengaluru City Development and In-charge of Bengaluru City District, Government of Karnataka

SRI PRALHAD JOSHI
Hon'ble Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, New Delhi

In the Respectful Presence of
SRI SANTOSH S.LAD
Hob'ble Minister for Labour and Dharward District In-charge

SRI KRISHNA BYREGOWDA
Hon'ble Minister for Revenue and Hassan District In-charge

SRI H.K.PATIL
Hon'ble Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs and Gadag District In-charge

Guest of Honor
SRI BASAVARAJ BOMMAI
Hon'ble Former Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka and MP, Haveri

Special Guests
SRI ABBAYYA PRASAD
Hon'ble Chairman, Karnataka Slum Development Board and Hon'ble MLA, Hubballi - Dharward (East)

SRI SALEEM AHMED
Hon'ble Government Chief Whip
Karnataka Legislative Council

Presided by
SRI N.H. KONAREDDY
Hon'ble MLA, Navalgund

All Dharward and Gadag District Hon'ble Ministers, MP's MLA's and MLC's and Chairmen of Commissionerate and all Corporation, Boards Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and Members are cordially invited

Presence of Superiority
DR. SHALINI RAJNEESH, I.A.S.
Hon'ble Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka

SRI GAURAV GUPTA, I.A.S.
Addl Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka

Welcomed gracefully by
SRI KRISHNAMURTHY B. KULKARNI, K.A.S.
Hon'ble Secretary, Water Resources Department, Government of Karnataka

SRI RAJESH AMMINABHAVI, K.A.S.
Hon'ble Managing Director, Karnataka Neeravari Nigama Limited

WATER IS THE FORCE OF LIFE | WATER IS THE PRECIOUS WEALTH | SAVE WATER | PROTECT THE WATER

QUICK READ

Crores worth ganja seized at Bengaluru Airport

Bengaluru
Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport seized ganja worth over ₹2.97 crore during separate operations. A passenger arriving from Malaysia was caught carrying 5.48 kg of ganja valued at ₹1.91 crore. In a second case, two travelers from Phuket were found with 3.03 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹1.06 crore. The seizures highlight ongoing efforts to curb drug trafficking through international flights. Officials said investigations are ongoing to track the source and intended destination of the seized drugs. Airport security has been tightened, and passengers are being screened more rigorously to prevent smuggling.

Young woman killed by BMTC electric bus

Bengaluru
A tragic accident claimed the life of 20-year-old Hanna Inaka from Manipur when a BMTC electric bus ran over her near K.R. Puram railway station. Hanna, riding on the back of a bike, fell after the vehicle touched the bus, causing her to land under its front wheel. She was rushed to a government hospital but died before receiving treatment. Hanna had moved to Bengaluru for work and lived in Marathalli. CCTV footage captured the horrifying incident. Officials stressed caution for both drivers and riders. The police are investigating the circumstances of the accident.

WIND UP KPTCL THEME PARK WORK BY APRIL: MIN

The park, coming up at Sarvagnanagar, aims to promote greenery, environmental awareness, and public welfare, serving as a model for the city and state

CH NEWS SERVICE

Energy Minister and Sarvagnanagar MLA KJ George has ordered that the KPTCL Theme Park under construction in HBR Layout 5th Block be completed by April.

He inspected the ongoing development and emphasized high-quality work. The park aims to promote greenery, environmental awareness, and public welfare, serving as a model for the city and state.

The minister instructed officials to ensure facilities such as a training centre, rural sports promotion area, open-air theatre, walking path, open gym, drinking water units, toilets, and mapping systems are ready for public use.

During the visit, he also checked progress on a 600 mm MS water pipeline project in HBR Layout 1st Block and Subbaiahnapalya 1st Main Road to resolve long-standing water issues.

Dr. George inaugurated a new classroom and dining hall at Government Kannada Model School in Kadugondanahalli, built under his MLA Local Area Development Fund. He also laid the foundation for road development on Veerannapalya Main Road, Indira Canteen Road, and Vinayaka Temple Road, while reviewing footpath and road works along Hennur Road.

The minister inspected Banaswadi Lake rejuvenation works, the underground drainage rehabilitation near HRBR Layout, a new RO drinking water unit in Banaswadi, and upgrades to the sports complex in OMBR Layout. He stressed the importance of proper sewage management, sanitation, water sustainability, and better facilities for youth and athletes in the constituency.

All projects are expected to be completed soon, ensuring improved infrastructure and public amenities for residents.

City cops recover 172 stolen mobiles using CEIR

BENGALURU

'The operation aimed at strengthening public trust and demonstrating the effectiveness of technology-based policing'

The Bengaluru City East Division Police successfully recovered 172 stolen mobile phones in a special operation conducted during January 2026, using the CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) system. The total value of the recovered phones is ₹22,34,651.

Out of the 172 phones, 145 have already been returned to their rightful owners, while the remaining devices will be handed over in due course. The operation was aimed at strengthening public trust and demonstrating the effectiveness of technology-based policing.

Station-wise details show significant recoveries across the city: Indiranagar recovered 30 phones, Hennur 28, Govindapura 24, and K.G. Halli 20. Other stations, including Halasuru, Baiyappanahalli, J.B. Nagar, Pulakeshinagar, and Banasawadi, also contributed to the successful operation.

The initiative was led by Sri Vikram Amate, IPS, Deputy Commissioner of Police, East Division, with guidance from the Assistant Commissioners of Police of Halasuru, Pulakeshinagar, Banasawadi, and K.G. Halli sub-divisions. Station House Officers and their teams played a crucial role in tracing and recovering the stolen devices.

The Bengaluru City Police reaffirmed its commitment to protecting citizens and curbing theft through advanced technology. Citizens were encouraged to cooperate with authorities and register stolen devices promptly to aid recovery through CEIR systems in future operations.

This operation highlights the growing use of technology in policing and the city police's focus on accountability and citizen safety.

Police inspect factories to stop narcotic activities

BENGALURU

In a major crackdown to protect public health and youth welfare, the Eastern Division police, under the Commissioner of Police, conducted inspections of chemical factories, workshops, and warehouses. A total of 45 factories, 165 workshops, and 116 warehouses were searched to prevent the manufacture, storage, transportation, and sale of narcotics. During the operation, owners found involved in illegal activities were warned of strict legal action. Officials emphasized that such measures are necessary to curb drug-related crimes and ensure community safety. The police said the operation will continue as part of ongoing preventive efforts.

We have not been asked for our opinion on metro fare hike: DCM DK Shivakumar

MANGALURU/BENGALURU

Stating that the Secretary from the Union government was the head of the metro fare fixation committee, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar today said that no one has asked for his opinion on metro fare hike.

Speaking to reporters in Mangaluru and at his Sadashivanagar residence, he said, "How is state government responsible for metro fare hike? The fare fixation committee is headed by a secretary appointed by the Centre. You can make me responsible for the hike if I have signed any file relating to it. No file on fare hike has come to me. I will discuss it with BMRCL officials on Monday. We don't want to trouble the common people. I will review the financial situation." He was replying to criticism from the BJP that state government was responsible for the fare hike.

Asked about BJP's comments that the fares were going up in view of state government not giving financial assistance to BMRCL, the DCM said, "Let BJP first say what it has done for the state?"

Asked about MP Tejaswi Surya's statement on how metro fares could go up without state government's approval, he said, "Poor guy, he doesn't have enough experience. He is limited to only tweets and statements before the media. Let him not blabber. Has he got anything from the Centre for the state? Let's not talk about 'empty trunk'."

When pointed out that people want to see DK Shivakumar as the CM, he said, "Both the people and the legislators want to see that happen. You (media) want it too. We have to go by what the party says."

Asked about Dalit organizations wanting Home Minister Parameshwar to become the CM, the DCM said, "Followers and fans obviously want to see their leaders as CM. I can't tell them not to do it."

Asked if the leadership change would happen after the State budget, he said, "Time will answer."

Man kills wife: Accomplice held over pistol purchase

BENGALURU

Police have arrested a man who helped Balamurugan, accused of shooting his wife, Bhuvaneshwari, in December, buy the pistol used in the crime. The arrest was made by Magadi Road police.

Abhimanyu Singh, a native of Uttar Pradesh, worked in a gold shop and was known to Balamurugan. Police said Singh helped track Bhuvaneshwari's movements near her workplace and had traveled with Balamurugan to Bihar to buy two pistols. One of the pistols was given to another accused, Maulesh from Tamil Nadu, along with a betel nut, allegedly to carry out the murder. However, Maulesh abandoned the plan and returned to Tamil Nadu.

Authorities said Balamurugan ultimately decided to commit the crime himself. On the evening of December 23, he shot Bhuvaneshwari in the Magadi Road area and later surrendered to the police.

Investigations revealed that Balamurugan had accomplices and carefully planned the act, including monitoring his wife's movements. Police had been searching for Maulesh, who was aware of the plan. During further inquiry, authorities obtained information about other individuals involved.

Magadi Road police have registered a case, arrested Balamurugan and Abhimanyu Singh, and are continuing their investigation into the network behind the murder. Authorities stressed that all angles, including how the pistol was procured and whether others were involved, are being thoroughly examined.

Cardinal Poola Anthony elected new CBCI president

CH NEWS SERVICE

His Eminence Cardinal Poola Anthony, Metropolitan Archbishop of Hyderabad, has been elected as the new President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). The election took place during the 37th General Body Meeting of the CBCI held on Saturday.

Cardinal Poola Anthony was born on November 15, 1961, in Poluru in the Diocese of Kurnool. He completed his early priestly formation at the minor seminary in Nuzvid and later studied at Saint Peter's Pontifical Seminary in Bengaluru. He was ordained as a priest on February 20, 1992, and was incardinated into the Diocese of Cuddapah.

In the early years of his ministry, he served as parish vicar at Saint Mary's Cathedral and Amagampalli. He later worked as parish priest in Tekurpet, Badvel, and Veerapalli, gaining close experience with people at the grassroots level. From 2001 to 2003, he pursued higher studies in the United States, earning a master's degree in pastoral care and attending theology courses at Loyola University, Chicago, while also serving in parish ministry.

Between 2004 and 2008, he served as Director of the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. He also handled several diocesan responsibilities, including education and school administration. He was appointed Bishop of Kurnool in 2008 and later became Metropolitan Archbishop of Hyderabad in 2020. In 2022, Pope Francis elevated him as a Cardinal.

With his election as CBCI President, Cardinal Poola Anthony takes charge of guiding the Catholic Church in India. Church leaders said his long pastoral experience and administrative skills will help strengthen the Church's mission of faith, service, justice, and human dignity across the country.

4 of a family end lives after boy's murder over 'Free Fire' addiction

BENGALURU

In a shocking incident, four members of a family died by suicide during a trip to Bihar, reportedly overwhelmed by guilt over the murder of 14-year-old Amogha Keerthi, addicted to the Free Fire mobile game.

Amogha, son of Shilpa (48), had been living with his uncle Nagaprasad (50) in Vinayak Layout, Kumbarahalli, under Soladevanahalli police limits, for eight months. His constant demands for money to play the game enraged Nagaprasad, who killed him months ago, surrendered to police, and was jailed. Shilpa bailed him out.

Haunted by the sin, Nagaprasad, his mother Sumangala (78), sister Shilpa, and Shruta (43)—all from Gubbi, Tumkur—embarked on a temple pilgrimage to atone. Tragedy struck when they consumed an overdose of sleeping pills. Police recovered the bodies along with mobiles, Aadhaar/PAN/ATM cards, ₹1.18 lakh cash, documents, and pill packets.

Soladevanahalli police are investigating the case registered under family suicide. The incident underscores the perils of gaming addiction and its ripple effects.

Young athlete runs 5,000 km across India

BENGALURU

Young Indo-Australian athlete Om Satija is running an extraordinary 5,000-kilometre journey from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to inspire youth and support children from economically weaker sections.

The run is part of the 'One Run India' initiative, aimed at promoting fitness, motivation, and social awareness.

Om Satija arrived in Bengaluru and met Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of Greater Bengaluru Authority, at the GBA headquarters. Rao praised the effort, calling it a commendable task and an inspiration for the younger generation. "Running across the entire country to motivate youth and support children is highly admirable," he said.

The athlete's journey highlights both physical endurance and social responsibility. He is using the run to observe and experience India's social and developmental landscape while raising awareness for education and support of disadvantaged children.

As part of the initiative, a 'Run for Celebration' program will be held at Koramangala Park tomorrow, encouraging the public to join in promoting fitness and social causes. The event aims to inspire local youth to pursue physical fitness, discipline, and social responsibility.

Om Satija's run has attracted national attention for its unique approach of combining sport with social service, encouraging young people to engage actively in community welfare while challenging themselves physically.

For more details about the program or participation, contact Abhishek Malik from One Run India at 09464642036 or visit onerunindia.org.

This initiative is expected to motivate thousands across the country to adopt a healthy lifestyle and contribute to society, making it a notable example of sports-driven social impact.

Accused on run for 18 years finally nabbed

BENGALURU

Halasuru Police have arrested an accused who had been absconding for 18 years after failing to appear in court. The case, registered at Halasuru Police Station, had a charge sheet filed against him after sufficient evidence was gathered. Despite repeated court summons, the accused did not appear, leading to a Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) and the case being listed as a Long Pending Register (LPR) matter.

After extensive efforts, police traced and apprehended the accused at Rampura in Bengaluru. Following standard legal procedures, he was produced before the Hon'ble Court, which remanded him to judicial custody.

The operation was conducted under the guidance of Sri Vikram Amate, IPS, Deputy Commissioner of Police, East Division, and Sri Rangappa T., Assistant Commissioner of Police, Halasuru Sub-Division. The team at Halasuru Police Station, led by Inspector Sri Santosh K., was commended for their persistent efforts in locating and arresting the long absconding individual.

This case highlights the commitment of Bengaluru City Police to ensuring accountability and bringing long-running cases to closure, regardless of the time elapsed, reinforcing public confidence in law enforcement and the judicial process.

TACKLING ECOLOGICAL ISSUE

GBA prepares ward-level climate action plans

BENGALURU

The newly-formed Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has prepared ward-level climate action plans for five selected wards across its urban corporations to address local environmental challenges effectively.

Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao announced this initiative during a meeting at the GBA head office, emphasizing that these plans will help identify issues at the local level and implement targeted solutions.

The five wards selected for the pilot program are Shantinagar in Bengaluru Central City Corporation, Jakkuru in Bengaluru Uttara Nagar Corporation, Begur in Bengaluru Dakshina Nagar Corporation, Vijinapur in Bengaluru East Municipal Corporation, and Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar in Bengaluru Paschim Nagar Corporation.

Similar plans will be developed for remaining wards in the coming months.

Under the Climate Action Cell, working groups have analyzed key sectors including energy, transport, solid waste management, urban planning, water and rainwater management, greening and biodiversity, and disaster management.

Rao suggested the establishment of a technical cell for scientific analysis, data-driven planning, and monitoring of climate action projects.

To increase citizen participation, an IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) cell has been formed to raise awareness of climate initiatives at the ward level. Additionally, Rao recommended launching a Climate Action podcast featuring experts and stakeholders to engage residents and promote understanding of local climate measures.

The initiative marks a significant step toward integrating climate action into urban planning and budget estimates, aiming for a sustainable and resilient Bengaluru.

QUICK READ

Crocodile sighting triggers panic in Bagalkot village

Bagalkot

A crocodile has been spotted in a lake at Halakurki village in Badami taluk, causing fear among residents. Villagers said the reptile has been seen in the water body for the past two to three days. Many locals depend on the lake for washing, livestock, and daily needs, increasing concern. People have avoided the area and warned children to stay away. Villagers have urged the Forest Department to act quickly, capture the crocodile, and relocate it to a safe habitat to prevent accidents and ensure public safety. Officials are expected to visit the site soon.

Thieves steal mobiles from moving lorry

Haveri

In a daring theft on National Highway 48, thieves stole mobile phones worth ₹25 lakh from a goods lorry traveling from Bengaluru to Dharwad. The lorry, driven by Malik John, was moving near Ranebennur when the digital lock was broken and six boxes of mobiles were taken. Despite heavy traffic, the thieves managed the heist skillfully. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation, questioning CCTV owners along the highway. Haveri SP Yashoda Vantagodi said a net has been laid and arrests are expected soon.

Mad dog attacks over fifteen people in Ranebennur

Ranebennur

Panic struck Ranebennur when a rabid dog attacked more than 15 people, including children, women, and the elderly, in Umashankar and Gaurishankar areas. Victims suffered bites on hands, feet, and faces and were treated at the taluk hospital, while some were referred to KMCRI, Hubballi. CCTV captured one attack, sparking anger at the municipal authorities for failing to control stray dogs. Following public outrage, municipal staff began efforts to capture the animal. Locals eventually chased and killed the dog. Police are investigating, and residents remain on alert, fearful of further attacks in the city.

Nanna Bhoomi program launched to fix land issues

Between 2013–2023, thousands of podi cases were resolved; Nanna Bhoomi targets three lakh repairs soon

DAVANAGERE

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Saturday said the state government has launched the "Nanna Bhoomi" programme to address long pending podi repair issues and bring relief to people facing land record problems. He said the initiative aims to correct land division records and provide legal clarity to landowners across Karnataka.

Speaking to the media in Davanagere, the minister said that between 2013 and 2018, around 5,840 podi cases were resolved in the state. From 2018 to 2023, about 8,500 cases were repaired. Since the launch of the Nanna Bhoomi programme one year ago, the government has taken up nearly 1.89 lakh podi cases. He added that the target is to repair three lakh podis in the coming period.

Krishna Byre Gowda said people living in tandas, haadis, and hattis have suffered for decades without proper document recognition. The government is now converting these habitations into revenue villages to give residents legal status and security.

He also spoke about inheritance-related land record issues, stating that nearly 49 lakh land cases were pending for decades. So far, 11 lakh such lands have been registered in the names of heirs. In Davanagere district alone, there are about 90,000 such cases, with a target to complete 50 percent by the end of March.

The minister praised village accountants who are actively updating land records and said incentives worth five to six crore rupees would be given to those performing well. He admitted that people are facing difficulties in property registration and e-property services but assured that senior officials are closely monitoring the issue.

He added that a land security project has been launched to scan original land records. So far, 63.5 crore pages have been digitized and made available online, reducing office visits, middlemen interference, and land fraud.

MP Seeks Answers On Rural Health Scheme Impact

The MP inquired about doctor and nurse availability, diagnostic facilities, scheme impact on rural healthcare access, and expansion of telemedicine and digital health services in villages

DAVANAGERE

Davanagere Member of Parliament Dr. Prabha Mallikarjuna has sought detailed information from the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on how the PM-ABHIM scheme has improved rural health services across the country. She raised questions in Parliament about the availability and quality of healthcare in villages after the scheme was introduced.

The MP asked about the present strength of doctors, specialist doctors, nurses and diagnostic facilities in rural Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres. She also wanted to know whether the scheme has improved people's access to health services in remote and backward areas.

In addition, she sought details about steps taken to expand telemedicine and digital health services in villages.

Replying to her query, the Central Government said that data related to doctors, specialists and nurses in rural PHCs and CHCs is available in the Health Dynamics of India 2022–23 report. The Ministry explained that the PM-ABHIM scheme, with an outlay of ₹64,180 crore, aims to strengthen public health infrastructure and ensure continuous healthcare from primary to tertiary levels. It also focuses on improving preparedness for future pandemics.

The government cited an evaluation report by NITI Aayog, which stated that PM-ABHIM is an equity based scheme designed to improve healthcare access in rural and backward regions. The reply also highlighted the role of e-Sanjeevani teleconsultation services under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, which has helped villagers receive expert medical advice.

To reach remote areas, 1,498 mobile medical units have been deployed under the National Health Mission. The government added that IPHS Dashboard and HMIS portals are being used to identify gaps in health facilities and take timely corrective action.

Veteran Congress Leader Yajaman Mothi Veeranna passes away

DAVANAGERE

Former Davanagere MLA and senior Congress leader Yajaman Mothi Veeranna passed away early Saturday morning after prolonged age related illness. He was ninety. His death has brought deep sorrow across Davanagere, with leaders, supporters, and citizens remembering his long public life and service.

Veeranna was a respected Congress leader who played a key role in strengthening the party in Davanagere district. After being elected as MLA in nineteen eighty nine, he earned the popular title "Yajaman of Davanagere" due to his leadership style and close connection with people. He was also known as a social worker and businessman who believed in helping the poor.

Family members said Veeranna had been unwell for several days and breathed his last at his residence late Friday night. Many admirers gathered to pay their respects, recalling his lifelong involvement in charity, religious activities, and social service. Leaders from different parties also expressed condolences, calling his death a major loss to public life in the district.

Bagalkot BJP protest over excise scam allegations

BAGALKOT

Tension prevailed at Basaveshwara Circle in Bagalkot on Tuesday as BJP leaders and workers staged a strong protest over alleged irregularities in the Excise Department. The protesters demanded the immediate resignation of Excise Minister R.B. Timmapura, accusing the state government of failing to act on the issue.

Demonstrators blocked the busy road, causing traffic disruption for some time and inconveniencing commuters. Slogans were raised against the state government and the Chief Minister, reflecting public anger over the alleged scam. As part of the protest, BJP workers burned an effigy of the Excise Minister and vowed to continue their agitation.

Bagalkot MP P.C. Gaddigowdara, former Bagalkot MLA Veeranna Charantimath, former Hunagunda MLA Doddanagouda Patil, Teradala MLA Siddu Savadi, and Jamkhandi MLA Jagadish Gudagunti took part along with several party workers. The leaders warned that protests would intensify if the government failed to take strict and immediate action without any delay.

After days of disruption over opposition demands following several floor party meetings

Power sharing deal exists, DK Shivakumar backed

DAVANAGERE

Channagiri MLA Basavaraju Sivaganga on Saturday said that a power sharing agreement already exists within the party and that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar enjoys the support of 139 MLAs. He added that many young legislators are fully prepared to stand by Shivakumar and follow whatever decision he takes.

Speaking to reporters, Sivaganga said he was aware of the internal understanding on power sharing and claimed that around 40 to 50 young MLAs were ready to make any sacrifice if required. He stressed that the matter should not be confused by repeated public statements from individuals who do not hold any official position in the party.

Referring to comments made by Yathindra Siddaramaiah, Sivaganga said the party's high command was closely watching such statements. He clarified that the real high command consists of leaders like Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, and Priyanka Gandhi, and not anyone else. He said if Chief Minister Siddaramaiah clearly states that no promise was made regarding power sharing, the issue would end and no MLA would raise further questions.

Sivaganga questioned why statements from people without electoral responsibility were being given importance. He pointed out that as an elected MLA, his opinion carried weight because he had a vote, while others did not. He also said that leadership decisions, including any change in the Chief Minister, rest solely with the party high command.

The MLA expressed confidence in the strength of the party leadership and said discipline would be maintained. He recalled that even ministers were removed earlier for speaking against the high command, showing that rules apply to everyone equally. He said the leadership observes every development carefully and will act at the right time.

Sivaganga added that he had no fear of notices or action and welcomed scrutiny. He said loyalty to the party and respect for the high command were most important, and leaders should avoid statements that could damage party unity and public trust.

Officials bust illegal urea stockpile in Ballari

BALLARI

Authorities raided a godown on the outskirts of Ballari city and seized over 4,000 bags of urea fertilizer being stored illegally. The godown, owned by Edwin from the industrial area, was reportedly hoarding government-supplied fertilizer to sell on the black market.

The joint operation was conducted by Agriculture Department officials and the police based on credible information. Edwin has been detained and is being interrogated. Investigations suggest a larger network of illegal urea distribution may be active in the region.

Authorities suspect the fertilizer, intended for farmers, was being stockpiled to sell at inflated prices. Currently, demand in Ballari is low due to repairs at the TB dam gate, which prevented many farmers from planting a second crop. However, urea is in high demand during the June monsoon, raising concerns that the fertilizer was being hoarded in anticipation of future sales.

Last year, the city faced a severe shortage of urea, with many shops displaying "out of stock" signs. Officials are probing whether the current stockpiling was an attempt to exploit a similar situation.

A case has been registered at the Bellary APMC police station, and authorities are continuing their investigation into the illegal stockpiling and distribution network.

Women's Commission always ready to solve problems

KOPPAL

The Karnataka State Women's Commission is committed to addressing women's issues and providing legal support, said Chairperson Dr. Nagalakshmi Chaudhary during a press conference at the city's tourist hall after her three-day tour of Koppal district. She stated that all government and private institutions with more than ten employees have been directed to form internal grievance redressal committees to ensure safe workplaces for women. The Excise Department has also been instructed to curb alcohol and drug abuse.

Dr. Chaudhary inspected several facilities and noted improvements, including the repair of a power pole in Siddeshwar Nagar. Expressing concern over Anganwadis located near railway tracks, she directed authorities to install fencing within a 3 km radius. She emphasized regular health check-ups, quality food, and proper infrastructure in student hostels. She urged officials to hold women's village meetings to address local issues and highlighted that 50% of NREGA job cards should be allotted to women, with more workdays ensured. She appreciated facilities at Karatagi taluk. Officials and media were present.

Public demands withdrawal of IPS officer transfer

GADAG

Strong opposition has emerged against the transfer of senior IPS officer Ravi D. Channannavar, with members of the public, his supporters, and youth leader Suresh Chalawadi urging the government to revoke the order. The demand seeks his posting as the Commissioner of Police for the Hubballi-Dharwad Commissionerate.

Supporters said the transfer of Channannavar from the Fire and Emergency Services Department to the Karnataka Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board is inappropriate. They stated that such an administrative move sidelines an efficient and dedicated officer known for his effective service across several districts in Karnataka.

A letter addressed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was submitted through Gadag district officials, stressing the need for experienced and honest officers in the police department. Citizens and supporters believe Channannavar's skills are best utilized in active policing roles. They appealed to the state government to reconsider the decision in the interest of public safety and effective administration.

KLS IMER hosts national conclave on educational leadership

BELAGAVI

Karnataka Law Society's Institute of Management Education and Research (KLS IMER), Belagavi, organised a one-day national conclave titled "Lighthouse: Guiding Educational Leadership for the Future" on Thursday as part of its Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) initiative. The conclave focused on emerging challenges and leadership needs in higher education.

Senior academicians, policymakers and industry experts participated in discussions on quality education and future preparedness. The programme began with an invocation and a welcome address by Dr. Arif Shaikh, Director of KLS IMER. Dr. Shailaja Hiremath, Associate Professor, outlined the objectives of the conclave.

The event was inaugurated in the presence of Shri Uday Kalkundrikar, Chairman of KLS IMER, along with Governing Council members Shri Raj Belgaumkar and Shri R.S. Mutalik. Prof. Sushil Kumar Pare coordinated the proceedings.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman of NETF, NBA and EC-NAAC and former AICTE Chairman, who spoke on policy reforms, accreditation and quality assurance. Expert sessions were conducted by Prof. C.M. Thyagaraja, Vice-Chancellor of Rani Channamma University, Prof. Vipul Pare of Flinders University, Australia, and Mr. Kapil Mahajan of Aequs Limited. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof. Sumanth Desai.

HEALTH EDUCATION EXPANSION

Minister promises Medical College for Yadgir district

YADGIR

Medical Education Minister Dr. Sharanprakash Patil on Saturday said his main goal is to ensure that poor and talented children get the opportunity to study medicine and become doctors. He was speaking after inaugurating the 30th annual conference of IAMM-KS held at the Yadgir Institute of Medical Sciences auditorium.

The minister said the state government aims to start medical colleges in all district headquarters. As part of this plan, government medical colleges will be sanctioned for Ramanagara and Bagalkot districts during the current period. At present, Karnataka has 24 medical colleges, and efforts are underway to expand this number.

Dr. Patil said he first became the Medical Education Minister in 2013 and has since focused on setting up medical institutions across the state. He said it was his long-standing dream that children from poor families and wage labor backgrounds should study medicine and serve society as doctors.

He noted that a new medical college has already been started in Yadgir district headquarters and that a nursing course has also been introduced. He urged students and local residents to make full use of these facilities. The minister also said that while Kalaburagi is being developed as a health hub, there is a clear intention to develop Yadgir district as a medical hub in the coming days.

He added that necessary infrastructure would be strengthened so that more people come forward to use public hospitals with confidence.

Introducing the program, Dean Dr. Sandeep V.H. said that though the medical college in Yadgir is new, the nursing course was started with the direct support of the minister. He praised the timely release of funds and continuous backing for development works.

MLA Channareddy Patil Thunnur, senior doctors, students, and delegates from several districts attended the conference. During the event, award certificates and plaques were presented to doctors who excelled in various categories, and a conference-related book was also released.

QUICK READ

Hassan student tragically drowns while swimming

Hassan

Prajwal, an 18-year-old second PUC student, tragically drowned while swimming in Uddur lake on the outskirts of Hassan. He had gone swimming with four friends on Saturday. While two friends swam safely, Prajwal ventured into the deeper part of the lake and was unable to return. Fire brigade personnel recovered his body, and the Pension Mohalla police are investigating the incident. The college and local community expressed deep sorrow over the loss. Officials have urged students and residents to exercise caution while swimming in lakes and other water bodies to prevent such accidents.

Bus Driver Caught Watching Reels, Suspended Immediately

Mandya

A public bus driver, Mahesh V, was caught watching reels on his phone while driving route number 79 from Malavalli to Mysore, sparking outrage among passengers. The Minister of Transport and Muzrai, after viewing the video, instructed strict disciplinary action. The Mandya Division of the Corporation has suspended the driver pending investigation, citing negligence and irresponsible behavior. Officials emphasized that such acts endanger commuters and contribute to road accidents. Passengers praised the quick response. The Corporation warned that strict measures will continue to ensure safety and prevent similar incidents in public transport services.

HIGH COMMAND DECIDES CM TENURE: PARAMESHWAR

The Home Minister stated Siddaramaiah's tenure, cabinet reshuffle, and power decisions are solely determined by the high command and CM

MYSURU

Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwar on Saturday clarified that Yathindra Siddaramaiah's statement claiming his father would remain Chief Minister for five years was purely personal and does not reflect the party's official position. He said the final decision on how long Siddaramaiah will continue as Chief Minister rests entirely with the party high command.

Speaking to the media in Mysuru, Parameshwar said he was unaware of the basis on which Yathindra made such a statement. He stressed that the Congress high command closely monitors all developments and will take decisions at the appropriate time. He added that there is no confusion within the party, and if there were any serious differences, they would have surfaced during the CLP meetings. No such issues were raised earlier, he said.

The Home Minister made it clear that there is no power sharing agreement within the party. He said it was the high command that appointed Siddaramaiah as Chief Minister, and only the high command will decide the duration of his tenure. Until then, Siddaramaiah will continue in the post. He also stated that any cabinet reshuffle is solely the Chief Minister's decision.

On law and order matters, Parameshwar said he has already directed police officials to inspect chemical factories across the state and verify which departments granted permissions. He questioned the need for separate teams when systems already exist to monitor drug-related issues. Referring to a recent drug raid in Mysuru, he expressed concern over conflicting statements issued by agencies and questioned the necessity of press releases when no drugs were mentioned in court records.

Responding to questions about loan waivers, Parameshwar said governments have waived loans in the past, including for farmers and minorities, and there is nothing political about such decisions. When asked about becoming Chief Minister in the future, he smiled and said such slogans are only expressions of public affection, while the final call always lies with the high command.

₹186 cr underground power project for Ullal

MANGALURU

Khader said the underground power project will enhance Ullal's appearance, resolve high-tension lines and pole issues, and be completed in two years to make it a model city

State Assembly Speaker and Mangaluru MLA U.T. Khader on Saturday announced that Rs 186 crore has been sanctioned for an underground electricity line connection system within Ullal city limits. He said the tender process will be completed soon and the work will begin shortly.

Speaking to reporters at the Circuit House, Khader said the project aims to improve the city's appearance and solve long standing issues such as high tension lines passing over houses and electric poles located inside residential compounds. He said the underground power system will be completed within two years and will help make Ullal a model city.

He also said Rs 96 crore has been sanctioned to upgrade the existing 32 KV power transmission system to a 110 KV system in the Mangaluru constituency. This project is designed to ensure that there is no power shortage for at least the next thirty years, even with future growth in industries, housing, and development activities.

Khader informed that funds worth Rs 252 crore have been approved for the construction of the Kotepur Ullal link bridge, and tenders will be invited soon. He said the one and a half kilometre long bridge will boost tourism and improve connectivity between villages. A separate plan of Rs 6 crore has been prepared for hotels, restaurants, and boat jetties near the bridge.

He added that development works are also planned in newly added villages like Thumbay and Meramajalu. The Harekala Thumbe bridge is already complete, and Rs 62 crore has been sanctioned for the Sajipa Thumbe link bridge. Commenting on recent assembly remarks by an MLA, Khader said elected representatives must speak responsibly and respect legislative rules. He clarified there was no disagreement with the Chief Minister over session conduct. He also said issues like new toll gates should be clearly explained to the public by local representatives.

Khader further announced that 50 cents of land has been allotted at Thiruvail, Vamanjoor, for building a Kannada Bhavan for the Kannada Sahitya Parishad.

Prof. Kumaraswamy warned KPCL's project, lacking environmental studies, threatens Western Ghats forests, discussed at a meeting with officials and activists

Strong public opposition grows against Sharavati Power Project

SHIVAMOGGA

Strong opposition has emerged in Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada districts against KPCL's proposed 2,000 MW Sharavati Pumped Storage Project, with environmental groups and local residents demanding that the project be stopped until proper studies are conducted.

Speaking at a meeting held at the District Collector's office, Prof. B.M. Kumaraswamy said KPCL was moving ahead with the project without conducting detailed environmental impact and due diligence studies. He warned that the project would destroy thousands of hectares of forest in the Western Ghats, one of the world's eight major biodiversity hotspots. The meeting was chaired by District Collector Prabhulinga Kavalikatti and attended by environmental activists and public representatives under the leadership of former Deputy Chief Minister K.S. Eshwarappa and Rashtra Bhakta Balaga.

Prof. Kumaraswamy said the Western Ghats are the source of most rivers flowing across South India and are already under severe stress. Any further destruction, he warned, would create long-term environmental problems not just for Karnataka but for the entire country. He strongly opposed KPCL's claim that only 54 hectares of forest and 16,000 trees would be affected, stating that nearly 18,000 acres of forest have already been damaged in the Sharavati valley.

He referred to a study by Central Forest and Environment Department official Praneet Paul, which recorded over 700 plant species and rare bird species in the area. The report had clearly advised against development work in such a sensitive zone.

Instead of deforestation, speakers urged KPCL to invest in battery energy storage and non-conventional power sources. They pointed out that a five gigawatt battery energy facility has already been inaugurated and suggested similar centres across Karnataka.

Later, Rashtra Bhakta Balaga announced a massive protest march from Gopi Circle to the District Collector's office, calling for large public participation against the project.

International Trade Fair 2026 highlights farmer empowerment

GADAG

The International Trade Fair-2026, focusing on post-production agriculture and farmer empowerment, was held at Tripuravasini, Palace Maidan, Bengaluru. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah felicitated the winners of the Krishi Pandit and Krishi Awards on February 6, 2026. Smt. Mangala Nilgunda from Mulagunda, Gadag district, received the prestigious Krishi Pandit Award for her outstanding contribution to agriculture.

Under the "Rashtika" natural farming campaign, Basavaraja Navi demonstrated the preparation and use of natural products such as Beejamruta, Jeevamruta, Neemastach, Dashaparni, and Brahmastach to farmers. Thousands of visitors learned about sustainable farming practices and natural alternatives to chemical inputs, emphasizing eco-friendly agriculture in Gadag district.

The fair also celebrated traditional cuisine through the Forgotten Dishes Competition. Mrs. Shilpa Angadi from Hulakoti, Gadag, showcased Gulladiki Laddus, reviving the nutritional and cultural value of ancestral recipes. She highlighted the benefits of preparing these traditional dishes at home instead of relying on modern, unhealthy fast foods.

The Agriculture Minister personally visited the stalls, tasted the Gulladiki Laddus, and praised the efforts of farmers in promoting natural farming and preserving cultural food heritage. The event drew thousands of farmers and citizens, providing them knowledge, recognition, and inspiration to adopt sustainable agriculture and revive traditional practices.

The fair reinforced Karnataka's commitment to farmer empowerment, eco-friendly farming, and promotion of indigenous knowledge in agriculture and cuisine.

Moodbidri rally demands nationwide workers' strike

MOODBIDRI

A vehicle rally was held in Moodbidri on Saturday to protest the central government's labor policies and call for a nationwide strike on February 12. The event was organized by the Farmers-Workers Joint Committee as a prelude to the all-India strike.

CITU District President B.M. Bhatt said the government is trying to weaken India's working class and push workers toward exploitation. "To take away workers' rights, suppress labor movements, and protect the rich, the government has repealed 29 labor laws and introduced four pro-corporate codes. This will harm workers further. Citizens should join the general strike, stop working for a day, and support the struggle," he appealed.

Speaking at the rally, labor leaders emphasized the need for unity among workers to safeguard their rights. They urged people from all sections to participate in the February 12 strike to send a strong message to the government.

Several labor leaders and workers attended the Moodbidri rally, including AITU District General Secretary Sitaram, CITU District General Secretary Sunil Kumar Bajal, and CITU Vice Presidents Yadav Shetty, Vasantha Achara, Ramani, and Yogish Jappinamoga. Participants stressed that peaceful protests and collective action are necessary to protect labor rights and improve working conditions across the country.

The vehicle rally drew public attention and set the stage for the upcoming nationwide labor strike.

Leopard undergoes midnight MRI at City Hospital

SHIVAMOGGA

A rare scene was seen late at night when a leopard from the Lion Safari was taken to Nanjappa Hospital for an MRI scan. Forest officials said the animal, named Bhadra, is 14 years old and has been suffering from age related health problems. For the past few days, the leopard was limping and had difficulty standing or moving.

To save the animal in time, the Wildlife Department decided to shift it to the city hospital, as there is no MRI facility at the Shivamogga Veterinary Medical College. Doctors from the Wildlife Department and specialists from Nanjappa Hospital were present during the scan and suggested further treatment after examining the reports.

Officials explained that leopards usually live only eight to twelve years in the wild. However, animals in safaris and zoos live longer because they receive regular food and medical care. At present, the Lion Safari has six male and five female leopards.

The incident created public curiosity after news spread that a leopard was treated in a private hospital. Many citizens called it a first time experience.

Environmentalists said forest areas of the Western Ghats have many wild animals but no proper hospitals, and urged the government to build a modern wildlife hospital in Shivamogga soon.

Bilidale Isha acquitted in Swamiji defamation case

MANGALURU

A Puttur court acquitted writer Bilidale Isha in a long running defamatory writing case filed against her over an article published about Raghaveshwara Bharathi Swamiji and the Math. The case was based on a private complaint filed by Keshav Krishna of Uppinangady who is a devotee of the Math.

He alleged that a derogatory and caste provoking article was published in the Kannada weekly Gauri Lankesh on May twenty seven two thousand nine. The complaint named journalist Gauri Lankesh as the first accused and columnist Bilidale Isha as the second accused. Charges were framed by the court and the trial continued for several years. During the pendency of the case Gauri Lankesh was murdered which led to the proceedings continuing only against the second accused.

After hearing the matter for nearly sixteen years the Puttur court on February seven acquitted Bilidale Isha of all charges.

Senior advocates Ashraf Agnadi Majeed Khan Saleena Nekkiladi and Misriya Mittur appeared for the defence. The case related to a front page report that referred to a film actress visit to the Math and carried a controversial headline and photograph. The article was alleged to be insulting defamatory and intended to provoke caste feelings against the Swamiji and the institution. With the acquittal the long standing legal battle has come to an end bringing relief to the accused after years of court proceedings. The judgment marks the closure of one of the longest running media related defamation cases in the region. Observers said the verdict would be discussed widely in journalistic circles nationwide.

Binnis Thomas Honored with the 2026 Global Excellence Award

BENGALURU

Senior journalist and writer Binnis Thomas, known for his advocacy of journalists' rights and press freedom, has been selected for the prestigious 2026 Global Excellence Award. The announcement was made by Sandeep Marwah, Chairman of the Festival Committee, during the 14th Global Festival of Journalism 2026, organised by the International Journalism Centre, New Delhi, and scheduled to be held in Noida. Thomas was chosen in recognition of his outstanding contribution to international journalism. The award ceremony will be held at Noida Film City, New Delhi, in the presence of Governors, Union Ministers, eminent journalists, writers and other dignitaries.

DESTINED POLITICAL POWER

Hassan could produce next PM or CM

HASSAN

Kalagyan Brahma Sadguru Vishwa Kalagyan Shivayogi Swamiji of Kodi Math, Tarihal Sansthan, Gajendragad, predicted major political changes in Karnataka and the country, stating that the next Prime Minister or Chief Minister could emerge from Hassan district.

Speaking at the 108 Sri Devi Purana chanting, Homa, and Dharma Sabha held at the Sri Hassanamba Temple, the Swamiji said Hassan will once again play an important role in state and national politics. He said the district has a strong spiritual and historical background and is destined to write a new chapter in India's political future.

Shivayogi Swamiji stressed that religious heads should not seek money or favors from politicians. He said he has never invited MLAs to his monastery for honors or asked anyone for donations. According to him, the true role of swamijis is to bless leaders, guide them to live pure lives, and encourage social reform, not to seek personal gain.

The Swamiji recalled his earlier predictions, stating that several political events he had spoken about in the past later came true. He referred to earlier instances when leaders rose to high positions after challenging periods in their lives. He said such changes are part of destiny and spiritual timing.

He further predicted that Hassan district will regain political strength due to the good deeds of past spiritual leaders and saints. He said the current Congress government in Karnataka may continue for about two years and acknowledged that welfare schemes like free bus travel have benefited people.

However, he warned that growing political hatred could harm the future of the country. He said that if negativity continues, strong leadership may not emerge for decades. He also predicted that a powerful national force could win a large number of seats in the 2029 elections and create new political history. The Swamiji concluded by saying that Hassan's future will be bright and that the district will again gain recognition at the national level in the coming years.

QUICK READ

Chitradurga officials to observe Slavery Abolition Day

Chitradurga

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Serfdom (Abolition) Act, 1976, Deputy Collector BT Kumaraswamy announced that February 9 will be observed as Abolition of Bonded Labour Day across district government offices. As part of the Golden Jubilee celebration, officials will conduct pledge ceremonies and programs to raise awareness about the eradication of bonded labour. All district-level officers and staff have been asked to actively participate and take the pledge against serfdom. The initiative aims to educate the public, reinforce legal protections, and ensure that the commitment to abolish bonded labour continues across Karnataka in both spirit and action

BESCOM announces power outage across Chitradurga

Chitradurga

BESCOM will carry out quarterly maintenance at multiple power distribution centers under the Chitradurga division, causing power supply variations on February 8 from 10 am to 5 pm. Affected areas include Chitradurga, Bharamasagar, Sirigere, Vijapur, Hireguntanur, Pandarahalli, HDPura, Chitrahalli, Madanayakanahalli, Turuvanur, Balenahalli, Holalkere, J.N. Kote, Ramagiri, Arasanaghatta, Chikkajajur, Godabanalu, and nearby villages. Maintenance at Arasanaghta, Chikkajajur, and Godabanalu VV stations will impact NJY and Krishi 11 KV lines. BESCOM Chitradurga Executive Engineer urged residents to cooperate during the scheduled outage and plan their activities accordingly while teams complete the essential maintenance work to ensure uninterrupted future power supply.

DK Shivakumar confident Congress will return power

Shivakumar expressed confidence in Congress's return, announced new Bhavan, and emphasized welfare schemes benefit all, countering BJP claims

PUTTUR

KPCC President and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar expressed confidence that Congress will return to power in Karnataka, saying even if BJP tries to stop it, the party will succeed. He made the statement after laying the foundation stone for a new Congress Bhavan near Puttur bus stand, which will be built at a cost of Rs. 2.5 crore.

Shivakumar called the building a "temple for Congress workers," emphasizing that donations will come from party members and that it will serve as a hub for organizational activities. He stressed that the government's welfare schemes benefit everyone, not just Congress supporters, countering BJP criticisms that the programs were politically motivated.

Addressing party workers, he warned against attempts to manipulate votes through voter suppression strategies targeting SC, ST, minority, and backward communities. He cited Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's example of facing political challenges and urged workers to remain united, disciplined, and focused on strengthening the party.

Shivakumar also said that while efforts may fail, prayers never fail, encouraging workers to keep faith in the party's mission. He assured that Congress is well-prepared to regain power in upcoming elections and that a pro-Congress atmosphere is emerging in D.K. district.

During the program, KPCC announced Rs. 10 lakh in support for the new Puttur Congress office. MLA Ashok Kumar Rai highlighted historic development achievements for Puttur, including the establishment of a medical college. Former ministers Vinay Kumar Sorake and B. Ramanath Rai urged vigilance against attempts to suppress votes and stressed the need for party organization.

Shivakumar reiterated his belief that prayers and efforts together will guide Congress to victory, adding, "Efforts may fail, prayers will not fail. Let's see." Party leaders and workers from across the district attended the ceremony.

Folk arts reflect life and belong to people: K.V. Prabhakar

RAMANAGAR

Prabhakar stated folk arts are not anti-people, praising the student-led folklore festival as a positive change from earlier activities dominated by senior artists and scholars

Folk art is always pro-people and close to common life, said K.V. Prabhakar, Media Advisor to the Chief Minister. He said folk arts are not just for entertainment but are mirrors that show the soil, history, culture and way of life of the people. He was speaking as the chief guest at the "Vidyarthi Janapada Lokotsava" organised by the Karnataka Janapada Parishad at Janapada Lok.

Prabhakar said there is nothing anti-people or anti-social in folk arts. He said it was special that this folklore festival was organised by and for students. Earlier, folklore activities were mostly limited to senior artists, scholars and research students. Now students themselves are taking responsibility, which is a positive change.

He said preserving and passing folk culture to the next generation is important to protect the roots of the land. Students should play a key role in this task. He added that even modern schools and colleges are now including folk songs and dances along with western performances, which shows the strength of folk traditions.

Folk arts reflect village beauty and the pain and hard work of common people. They carry customs, beliefs and values of ancestors to the next generation. Art forms like Yakshagana, Bayalata and Doddaata help common people understand stories from epics and legends.

He said folk arts unite people beyond caste and religion. Village festivals and fairs create unity and harmony through collective performances. Farmer songs sung during work reduce tiredness and bring joy.

Prabhakar explained that every region of Karnataka has unique folk arts, enriching the cultural map of the state. Though folk literature is oral, it has protected the beauty of the Kannada language. He urged students to proudly preserve this living tradition.

Janapada Parishad President H.C. Boralingaiah, Sri Annadaneshwara Swamiji, former MLA K. Raju and other dignitaries were present.

Mandya Budanur Utsav helitourism safety guidelines announced

MANDYA

Helitourism during the Budanur Utsav from February 20-22 will follow strict safety measures, said District Collector Dr. Kumar. Officials were instructed to ensure proper parking, lighting, drinking water, toilets, first aid, ambulance service, and on-site doctors.

Fire brigade vehicles will be stationed to prevent mishaps. Tickets will cost Rs. 3,800 per person, with children under five not allowed; each ride lasts seven minutes.

Visitors must carry identity cards, follow queue rules, and avoid electronic devices or water bottles.

Superintendent of Police Dr. VJ Sobharani and other officials oversaw preparations to ensure smooth, safe public experience.

Priyank Kharge stated CM decisions rest with senior Congress leaders; others' opinions, including Yathindra's, are irrelevant

CM selection authority lies with top Congress brass: Kharge

DAVANAGERE

Rural Development Minister Priyank Kharge clarified that senior Congress leaders' decisions on the Chief Minister's post are final. Speaking after inaugurating the Gram Soudha in H Gopagondanahalli, Honnali taluk, he said that statements made by others, including Yathindra Siddaramaiah, are personal opinions and hold no authority.

He emphasized that neither MLA Iqbal Hussain nor MLA Basavaraj Sivaganga raised any concerns regarding the CM issue during the event. Priyank Kharge said that the word of Kharge Saheb and Rahul Gandhi is final and must be respected. "Whoever speaks in front of the media on this issue is irrelevant," he added.

Kharge also criticized the BJP, accusing it of launching "Operation Kamal" nationwide. He said opposition parties lack the capability to manage governance and questioned their focus on Congress instead of their own responsibilities. "We have been working well for 135 years and will continue to do so for many more," he remarked.

On allegations raised by Speaker Om Birla regarding a conspiracy against Prime Minister Modi, Kharge questioned the Home Minister's capabilities. He noted that Modi's statements in Parliament were trivial, focusing only on personal habits, and said tough questions should instead be directed to Congress leaders like Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge.

Priyank Kharge's comments come amid ongoing speculation about the leadership and future political strategies in Karnataka. He reiterated that Congress has a clear chain of authority and that internal matters are being managed by the high command, assuring party workers and supporters that there is no confusion regarding the CM position.

Krishna River Water Plan for Kolar Districts

KOLAR

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said he will soon meet Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to discuss bringing Krishna river water to Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts. He spoke to the media in Kolar on Saturday, stressing that the districts need clean river water due to repeated failures of previous projects.

The Union Minister criticized the Ettinhole project, saying it promised water ten years ago but delivered only sewage water to Bengaluru. The project cost has now reportedly reached ₹30,000 crore, with mismanagement and work given to unqualified contractors, according to the CAG report. He said residents in these districts have been cheated, and even children are falling sick due to polluted water.

Kumaraswamy praised MP Mallesh Babu for efforts to bring Krishna river water to the region and said he will coordinate with Andhra Pradesh without affecting the sentiments of their people. He also expressed concern about the Yaragole project in Bangarapet, where KC Valley sewage is still entering the reservoir.

Addressing other issues, he clarified that he has no connection to the notice issued by the central government to former Speaker Ramesh Kumar regarding forest land encroachment. He emphasized that the government must focus on solving water, agriculture, and local problems rather than issuing unnecessary notices.

On political matters, Kumaraswamy said seat-sharing talks with BJP for assembly constituencies have not started yet. Priority will be given to Zilla Panchayat and local body elections. Several leaders, including MLA G.K. Venkatashivareddy and former MLAs Chaudareddy Tupalli and H.M. Ramesh Gowda, attended the meeting.

ZED and LEAN workshop held under RAMP Scheme

GADAG

A workshop on ZED (Zero Defect Zero Effect) and LEAN practices was successfully conducted under the Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme 2025-26 at Mrs. Kamala and Mr. Venkappa M. Agadi College of Engineering & Technology, Lakshmeshwar, Gadag. The program was organized by the District Industrial Centre, Gadag, in collaboration with Karnataka State Marketing Communication & Advertising Ltd., Bangalore.

The event, held on Saturday at 10 a.m., brought together local MSMEs, industry leaders, and government officials to enhance productivity, quality, and sustainability in small and medium enterprises. Key participants included Mr. Santhosh M.V., District Leading Bank Manager, SBI, Dr. Mallur Basavaraja, District Skill Development Officer, and Shri Prashanth P. Barigidada, Joint Director, District Industrial Centre, Gadag.

The workshop featured expert sessions from Mr. Gopinadha Rao, retired Deputy Director, MSME DFO Bangalore, who explained ZED and LEAN concepts through detailed presentations.

Attendees learned practical strategies to implement Zero Defect and Lean manufacturing processes, aimed at improving operational efficiency and reducing environmental impact.

District officials said the program is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen MSMEs across Gadag district, providing them with technical knowledge, modern management practices, and government support. MSME participants expressed enthusiasm about applying the learnings in their enterprises to enhance competitiveness and growth under the RAMP Scheme.

The workshop marked another step in Gadag's commitment to promoting innovation and sustainable practices in small and medium-scale industries.

Chitradurga officials urged to aid seniors

CHITRADURGA

Sub-Divisional Officer Venkatesh Naik has instructed all government offices in the district to make special arrangements for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. He emphasized that officials should provide separate seating and treat them courteously.

Naik spoke during a meeting held at the Sub-Divisional Officer's office, which focused on implementing the Guardians and Parents Protection Act, the rehabilitation center project, and grievance redressal for differently-abled persons. He also directed that KSRTC operators provide reserved seats for seniors and disabled passengers, with officials giving proper guidance to bus operators.

Regarding pending court cases, Naik said that the Rashtreeya Lokadalat on February 28 will focus on resolving cases involving senior citizens through mediation. He stressed the importance of enforcing maintenance orders and ensuring senior citizens are aware of pension benefits. Under Sandhya Suraksha Yojana, citizens over 60 receive Rs. 800, and those above 65 get Rs. 1,200. Pension Adalats will be used to inform them.

Naik also instructed officials to properly utilize grants for persons with disabilities. Currently, only a small percentage of funds in gram panchayats and local bodies is used for welfare programs. He said immediate action is needed to organize programs and support the differently-abled.

The district currently has two aided old age homes, 42,198 pension beneficiaries above 60, and 1,10,475 above 65. According to the 2011 census, 35,971 persons in the district have disabilities, and 35,074 have received UDID cards.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Dr. Renuprasad, Tahsildar Narasimhamurthy, District Hospital Resident Physician Dr. Anand Prakash, and other officials attended the meeting.

JUSTICE WITHOUT DELAY

Deputy Lokayukta urges faster public complaint disposal

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Deputy Lokayukta K.N. Phanindra has urged all government officers and employees to handle public complaints and applications quickly and fairly. He emphasized that officials must first check whether a complaint falls under their department and take appropriate action without unnecessary delay.

Phanindra spoke while visiting Taluk Panchayats in Chintamani, Bagepally, Shidlaghatta, and Chelur. He started on-the-spot inquiries for pending Lokayukta cases and resolved some complaints immediately. A total of 75 cases were heard on Saturday, mainly related to revenue and rural development departments, including Panchayat Raj. Some complaints highlighted delays and bribery, which he instructed officials to address carefully.

He reminded officials that public service is a responsibility given by the Constitution, and it should be executed with fairness, honesty, and without expecting favors. He urged employees to avoid negative attitudes toward complainants and handle grievances sincerely, while the public should also file complaints responsibly and without malice. Phanindra stressed that government work is like a service to God. Officials must provide eligible citizens their rights and benefits without undue pressure, delay, or influence. Bribery, favoritism, or negligence should be avoided. Complaints and applications should be resolved objectively and within legal timelines.

District Collector G. Prabhu, Zilla Panchayat Acting Chief Officer Dr. Y. Naveen Bhatt, Senior Civil Judges Kiran M Patil and Shilpa, Lokayukta S.P. Antony John, D.Y.S.P Virendra Kumar, and other officials and citizens attended the meeting.

Phanindra's visit reinforced the Lokayukta's policy of improving government service, ensuring timely justice, and creating a more transparent and accountable system for the people of Chikkaballapur.

QUICK READ

Meghalaya mine blast death toll rises to 27

Shillong

Two more bodies were recovered from the illegal coal mine blast in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills, raising the death toll to 27. The explosion happened Thursday in Thangsku, Umsngat village. Rescue teams continue searching for missing persons. Police said efforts are on to identify the dead, and operations will continue until all are found. A suo motu FIR has been filed, and two men have been arrested. Investigations are ongoing.

Arms, explosives seized from Naxal dumps

Gariaband

Security forces recovered arms, ammunition, explosives, and weapon-making equipment from six Naxal hideouts in Gariaband's hilly areas. The dumps were found in Bhaludiggi and Metal hill ranges near the Odisha border after a 36-hour search. The operation was based on information from surrendered Maoists, revealing that the banned CPI (Maoist) leaders had stored weapons in these hills. A special E-30 police unit conducted the search, and efforts continue to secure the area.

Five new Cheetah cubs born in MP's Kuno Park

Sheopur

Cheetah Aasha has given birth to five cubs in Kuno National Park, raising India's total cheetah population to 35. Aasha was brought from Namibia to help revive the cheetah species, extinct in India for decades. With this birth, 24 cubs have been born in India so far. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav praised forest staff and veterinarians for their dedication and called the state a leading center for wildlife conservation.

All credit goes to Trump-Modi for Trade Deal: Gor

'It will open India's market to American products. This marks a new era in US-India economic relations'

NEW DELHI

The US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, on Saturday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump for their roles in achieving a major India-US trade deal. Posting on X, he said all credit goes to their leadership and vision, calling it "a new day" for bilateral relations.

The announcement follows US President Trump's declaration of a joint statement with India, aiming to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers and open India's large market to American products. US Trade Representative Ambassador Greer said the deal would benefit American workers, farmers, and producers by lowering tariffs on industrial goods and many agricultural products.

Greer highlighted that the agreement reflects deepening ties between Washington and New Delhi, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and farmers in both countries. He also thanked Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal for his efforts in achieving balanced trade.

The joint statement is part of a framework to expand market access, reduce trade barriers, and advance fair and reciprocal trade between the two nations. It marks an interim step toward a broader US-India Bilateral Trade Agreement, first initiated by Trump and Modi in February 2025.

Officials believe this deal will strengthen economic relations and unlock new opportunities, benefiting businesses on both sides. Analysts see it as a significant milestone in the ongoing partnership between the two world economies, fostering cooperation and long-term growth.

Jaishankar discusses strategic, security issues with Greek Minister

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held talks with Greek Defence Minister Nikos Dendias on Friday, focusing on strategic and security matters. Dendias visited India at the invitation of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Jaishankar described the meeting on X as an in-depth conversation covering a wide range of issues, appreciating Dendias' insights and assessments. Dendias expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and called the discussion cordial, covering regional and international developments. He noted that the visit included meetings with Indian officials and participation in the India-EU Forum, where he discussed security issues and potential cooperation between Greek and Indian defence industries. The visit follows India's signing of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said that India is signing "future-ready" trade deals with many countries, including the EU and the US, and that the world is praising these agreements. Modi also highlighted India's growing role as a trusted global partner contributing to global welfare.

During the meetings, both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and exploring areas of strategic collaboration. Defence and security cooperation, regional stability, and industrial partnerships were key points of discussion. Analysts say this visit signals India's intent to deepen ties with Greece and the EU, enhancing cooperation in trade, defence, and international security frameworks.

Nikos Dendias met Jaishankar in New Delhi to discuss strategic, regional, and international security issues during his official visit to India

India-US trade deal to big give boost to Indian exporters

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar praised the India-US interim trade agreement on Saturday, saying it will give Indian exporters greater market access and support the 'Make in India' initiative. In a post on X, he said the deal opens new opportunities for trade and strengthens the partnership between the two nations. The agreement sets a reciprocal tariff of 18% on Indian goods such as textiles, leather, machinery, and more, while removing tariffs on certain aircraft and parts from India. India will also reduce tariffs on US industrial and agricultural products. Under the deal, India plans to purchase $500 billion worth of US products over five years. Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the framework will benefit MSMEs, farmers, and fishermen, boost exports, and create jobs, especially for women and youth. Analysts say the agreement marks a key step in deepening India-US economic ties.

SIMS Hospital expands healthcare collab with Seychelles officials

CHENNAI

President of Seychelles Patrick Herminie and Health Minister Marvin Nolan Fanny met Ravi Pachamuthu, Chairman of SIMS Hospital, to plan a collaborative roadmap to improve healthcare services in Seychelles. The partnership aims to provide super-specialty medical outreach, hospital infrastructure development, digital health networks, workforce support, affordable medicines, and expanded dialysis services.

A team of SIMS specialists will visit Mauritius and Seychelles next week to evaluate current healthcare systems and plan further actions with the Seychelles Ministry of Health. The discussions also proposed regular super-specialty medical camps to improve diagnostics, patient care, and clinical outcomes while strengthening local healthcare capacity.

Key areas include developing a nationwide digital healthcare network linking hospitals and clinics for better patient management, referrals, and decision-making. High-quality, cost-effective pharmaceuticals will be supplied, supported by cloud-based inventory systems to reduce stock-outs and waste. The collaboration also focuses on workforce development, hospital modernization, and planning new healthcare facilities.

President Herminie said the partnership will ensure quality care for citizens through improved infrastructure, trained staff, and specialized services such as dialysis. Ravi Pachamuthu highlighted the importance of strengthening systems, digital networks, and affordable access to medicines. Both sides emphasized long-term capacity building and sustainable healthcare development to position Seychelles as a regional healthcare leader.

Jairam Ramesh criticises US-India Trade Agreement

NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday expressed concerns over the US-India interim trade agreement, saying the joint statement does not provide key details. Posting on X, he claimed India would stop importing oil from Russia and warned that the US may reimpose a 25% penalty if India buys Russian oil directly or indirectly.

Ramesh also said India's goods trade surplus with the US could vanish and expressed uncertainty over IT and services exports. He added that Indian exports to the US may face higher tariffs than before.

Under the deal, the US will charge 18% tariffs on Indian goods, including textiles, leather, machinery, and home decor, while India will reduce or remove tariffs on US industrial, agricultural, and food products. The US has withdrawn its previous 25% duty on Indian imports. India will buy $500 billion of US goods over five years, including energy, aircraft, precious metals, and technology products.

Both nations will tackle non-tariff barriers and improve access for US medical devices, ICT products, and farm items. The agreement also promotes joint technology trade and cooperation. Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) negotiations will continue, with the US considering India's requests to lower tariffs further.

Shringla predicts significant rise in India-US exports

KOLKATA

RS MP and former Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Saturday said the India-US Interim Trade Agreement provides clarity and confidence to India's business community, he predicted a significant increase in Indian exports to the United States. "This is a very important deal following our recent trade agreement with the European Union," Shringla said. He added that the deal will benefit exporters, small industrialists, farmers, and labourers, giving them a competitive edge. Combined with the EU agreement, India now has access to a market of almost $60 trillion, he noted, calling it excellent news for Indian youth.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also praised the deal, saying it will strengthen the 'Make in India' initiative and provide new opportunities for exporters. He called the agreement a framework for a mutually beneficial trade partnership between India and the US.

Air Marshal holds talks with Singapore armed forces officials

NEW DELHI

Air Marshal Balakrishnan Manikantan, AOC-in-C, CAC, held discussions with Brigadier-General Ho Kum Luen, Chief of Staff-Air Staff, Republic of Singapore Air Force, and Brigadier-General Chan Ching Hao, Chief of Staff-Joint Staff, Singapore Armed Forces, on Saturday at Changi Exhibition Centre. The talks took place on the sidelines of the Singapore Airshow 26.

During his visit, Air Marshal Manikantan also interacted with H.E. Dr. Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India to Singapore, and the Sarang Helicopter Display Team participating in the airshow. In a solemn ceremony, he laid a wreath at the Kranji War Memorial to honour soldiers who lost their lives in World War II. The Singapore Airshow 26, held from February 7 to 8, features aerobatic flying displays, the latest commercial and military aircraft, and family-friendly activities. Mascots Leo and Leonette entertained visitors, while aerobatic teams performed high-speed stunts and manoeuvres with precision. India and Singapore had adopted a joint defence cooperation framework on September 4, 2025, promoting regular exchanges between Defence Ministers and senior officials through Defence Ministers' Dialogue and Defence Policy Dialogue. The partnership includes joint army, navy, and air force exercises, and cooperation in emerging defence technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, Automation, and Unmanned Vessels.

Pak Fiscal Policy overburdens productive citizens: Report

NEW DELHI

Pakistan's fiscal policy is heavily taxing a small productive population to fund a large and unproductive bureaucracy, according to a recent Business Recorder report. The report highlights that the country suffers from a deep identity crisis and lacks the institutional capacity to provide effective public services.

Pakistan has only 3.4 million effective taxpayers, representing just 4% of its 85.6 million-strong workforce. These taxpayers are expected to bridge a massive fiscal deficit while the informal elite largely escape taxation. Salaried professionals often pay up to 35% in taxes but still spend heavily on private security, power, and education because public services remain inadequate. The report argues that this system penalizes excellence and discourages transparency.

As a result, about 800,000 skilled professionals are projected to leave Pakistan by 2025, either fleeing restrictive policies or seeking better opportunities abroad. While the IMF and state technocrats argue that debt servicing—nearing Rs 9 trillion—requires maximum extraction from documented taxpayers, the report calls this reasoning flawed.

It stresses that taxing the small productive base does not foster growth and instead fuels a shadow economy.

The report concludes that true fiscal health comes from expanding the taxpayer base and building trust, not overburdening a microscopic group of citizens. High rates on a limited population create stagnation rather than solving economic challenges.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that my clients **Mr. Mahesh Jaganath, S/o Mr. N. Jaganath, and Mrs. Shanthi P, W/o Mr. Mahesh Jaganath,** both residing at No. 47, Ayappa Temple Street, Near Kamala Nehru Patashala, Thyagarajanagar VTC, Bengaluru South – 560028, are intending to purchase the below-mentioned property by availing a housing loan from Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd. The present owner of the property is Mrs. Nagarathnamma, W/o Mr. Panchakshari. The said property was originally part of 3.11 acres of land in Sy. No. 72, Kommaghatta, which was acquired by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) on 02 December 2024 for the formation of Kempegowda Layout. The development was carried out under a joint development scheme with the landowner in a 60:40 ratio.Under the said scheme, Site No. 1918, 4th Block, 'D' Sector, Kempegowda Layout, Kommaghatta, was allotted by the BDA on 03 May 2025 and subsequently conveyed by the BDA in favour of Mrs. Nagarathnamma through a Registered Sale Deed bearing Document No. BDA-1-00707-2025-26 dated 29-05-2025, whereby she became the absolute owner of the property. The public is hereby notified that if any person or persons have any claim, right, title, interest, lien, charge, mortgage, inheritance, or objection whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property, they are required to submit their claims with supporting documentary evidence, in writing, to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no such claim is received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that there are no claims or objections from any quarter, and my clients shall proceed with the purchase of the said property. Any claims received thereafter shall not be entertained.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of the immovable residential property bearing Site No. 1918,BDA PID No. 6000083834, situated at Kommaghatta Village, Sy. No. 84,4th Block, 'D' Sector, Kempegowda Layout, measuring East to West: 9 meters and North to South: 12 meters, totally measuring 108 square meters, and bounded on: **East by:** Site No. 1919 **West by:** Site No. 1917 **North by:** Site No. 1907 **South by:** Road.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI,
Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Sri.Rakesh A S/O Anjan Kumar,** residing at #2693,7th B Main RPCL Layout, Bangalore South, Karnataka-560026, My client are willing to purchase the property by availing a loan with Piramal Finance limited by the present property owner **Mrs. Meri Jesuraj W/O Jesuraj,** Registered Sale Deed Document No.SRI-1-00400-2024-25, dated: 12-04-2024, my client further states that any disputes his ownership or possession of the schedule property member of the public are hereby notified that if anyone having any adverse claim in respect of the said property hereby advised to place their claim with appropriate written evidence. please note that claims received without written evidence within 7 Days from the date of publication of this notice there after will not be entertained.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Municipal No.74, Khaneshumari No.74, Situated at Muddinapalya Village, Yashavanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Measuring: East to West: 60 Feet & North to South:15 in all measuring 900 Sq.ft, and bounded on the : **East by:** Road, **West by:** Venkataramanappa's Site, **North by:** Krishnappa's Property, **South by:** 2 Feet Passege and Huchchappa's House.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI,
Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

The State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Karnataka, constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India, has accorded **Environmental Clearance** for the development of **JSS Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital with 366 beds at Sy. No. 41/E, Alanahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mysuru Taluk, Mysuru District, Karnataka,** proposed by **M/s. JSS Mahavidyapeetha.**

The Environmental Clearance has been granted vide **No. SEIAA 298 CON 2025,** dated **03.02.2026.**

A copy of the Environmental Clearance letter is available on the websites of MoEF&CC / SEIAA, Karnataka at:

- **http://parivesh.nic.in**
- **http://environmentclearance.nic.in**
- **http://seiaa.karnataka.gov.in**

This public notice is issued in compliance with the conditions stipulated in the above-mentioned Environmental Clearance.

NAME CHANGE

I, **HAJEERA BEGUM SAHEB KHAN**, W/o, Saheb Khan K, Resident of No 1288/B,T K Road Kalanagara Channapatna Ramanagar Dist, 562160, have changed my name to **HAJEERA BEGUM**, vide affidavit dated: 07.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **RITHESH VENKATACHALA REDDY**, S/o. Venkatachala, Resident of No.37, Sorahunise, Varthur Post, Bengaluru-560087, have changed my name to **RITHESH VENKATACHALA REDDY**, S/o. VENKATACHALA REDDY, Vide Affidavit Dated: 19.01.2025 before notary A.M. RAJASEKAR, Bengaluru.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

Government of Karnataka
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI

No : EE/PRED/KLB/KKRDB /TS-5/2025-26/5977 Date : 06/02/2026

:: TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

(Through E-procurement Two Cover System)

1) Name of work: 1. Afzalpur Taluka 1 Works Indent No.(1) 24246, 2. Chittapur Taluka 2 Works Indent No.(1) 24239 (2) 24240, 3. Jewargi Taluka 1 Work Indent No.(1) 24264, 4. Kalaburagi Taluka 1 Work Indent No.(1) 24237 **Total 5 Works**, 2) Head of account: **MP LAD FOR THE YEAR 2025-26**, 3) Amount put to tender: **Minimum Rs. 54,24,744.97, Maximum Rs. 87,80,824.80,** 4) Class of Contractor: Class- III and Above, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **07-02-2026 to 19-02-2026 upto 4.00 pm**, 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: Minimum Rs. 1,08,500.00, Maximum Rs. 1,76,000.00, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **07-02-2026 to 19-02-2026 upto 4.00 pm**, 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **20-02-2026 After 4.00 pm**, 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **21-02-2026 After 11.00 am**, 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, RajapurKalaburagi, 12) Website Address: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1056/KSMC&A/2025-26 **Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi**

TOWN PANCHAYATH YELANDUR
CHAMARAJANAGAR DISTRICT

No. YLD/J.E/TENDER/CR/02/2025-26 Date: 05.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through KPPP portal only)

The Chief, officer Town Panchayath Yelandur Chamarajanagar District, invites e-procurement short term tender from eligible contractors under Kw-4 document Under Work details as follows. 1) Name of work: Construction of Residential building (G+= 12 Dus) under poura Karmika Gruha Bhagya Yojana at Yelandur town Panchayath Chamarajanagar Dist under Pourakarmika Gruha Bhagya Yojane Grants (DMA/2023-24/BD/WORK_INDENT14743/CALL-2) Estimate Cost: 186.00 Lakhs, EMD Amount: 2,36,100 Rupees, Period of Completion: 09 Calendar Months. Last date for uploading of completed tender documents : 25.02.2026 at 5.00 P.M, Pre bid Meeting Venue & date: 12.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M, (Town Panchayath Office Yelandur) Last date of receiving tender 25.02.2026 at 5.30 P.M, Date of opening of tenders technical bids: 27.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M & Date of opening of Financial bids: Informed after Successful technical Bid Contractors, Interested contractors shall register on the e-procurement platform to participate in this tender. Contractors can download the tender documents from e-procurement platform (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in). Tenders shall be submitted electronically at https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in EMD and tender processing fees shall also be paid electronically.

Sd/-
CHIEF OFFICER,
Town Panchayath Yelandur

DIPR/CHAMAGAR/689/2025-26

QUICK READ

Bribery: CPRI joint director granted bail

NEW DELHI

A special CBI court at Rouse Avenue granted bail to Rajaram Mohanrao Chennu, Joint Director at CPRI, in a bribery case. The court said bail cannot be denied just to please public opinion and emphasized balancing personal liberty with public interest. Chennu spent nearly 30 days in custody, and further interrogation was unnecessary. He is accused of seeking a bribe of up to Rs 14 lakh for favorable test reports, with Rs 9.49 lakh recovered in a trap operation.

Preliminary report on Ajit Pawar crash soon

NEW DELHI

Authorities are investigating the Learjet 45 crash that killed Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and four others near Baramati Airport. MoS for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said the aircraft's black box has been recovered and is under analysis. Teams from the AAIB and DGCA are examining the data to determine causes. A preliminary report is expected after initial analysis. Officials stressed the probe is ongoing and no conclusions should be drawn prematurely.

Woman found critically injured in Indore

Indore

A woman was found critically injured near Sugnidevi College in Indore, with her clothes in a dishevelled state, police said. She was immediately taken to a hospital. Deputy Commissioner Kumar Prateek said the woman is around 30 years old and has past criminal records. Police are investigating her connections with substance users and scanning nearby CCTV footage. While sexual assault has not been confirmed, authorities are not ruling it out. The case remains under active probe.

'Politically motivated': Sonia opposes 1980 voter list entry

The Congress leader's counsel dismissed the claims saying the complaint did not provide any foundational documents.

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi has opposed a plea in a Delhi court alleging that her name was included in the voter list three years before she became an Indian citizen in 1983. Her lawyers argued that the complaint was politically motivated and filed for an improper purpose.

The response was submitted before Special Judge Vishal Gogne, who is hearing a revision plea challenging a September 11, 2025, magistrate's order that refused to investigate the allegation. The court has scheduled further proceedings on February 21.

The original complaint was filed by advocate Vikas Tripathi, vice president of the Central Delhi Court Bar Association. Gandhi's lawyers, including Tarannum Cheema, Kanishka Singh, and Akash Singh, said the allegations were "wholly misconceived, frivolous, politically motivated, and an abuse of the law." They asked the court to dismiss the plea, noting that matters of citizenship fall under the Central government, while electoral roll disputes are handled solely by the Election Commission. The reply also said the complaint lacked supporting documents, including any application or oath form. It argued that investigating allegations from more than 40 years ago is impossible and violates Article 21, which protects life and personal liberty. The lawyers described the allegations as "imaginary and motivated" and misleading, as they assumed a voter's name is automatically included by submitting Form 6.

The September 2025 magistrate's order had stated that the complaint was legally untenable, deficient, and beyond the court's authority. Tripathi's counsel, senior advocate Pavan Narang, had claimed that Gandhi's name was added in January 1980 when she was not an Indian citizen, alleging possible forgery. The magistrate dismissed the plea, saying the court could not assume jurisdiction over the matter.

No special session on Revenue deficit grants: HP CM

Sukhu announces Revenue Deficit Grant issue will be discussed in the Budget session; MLAs raise concerns over stalled development and apple imports.

SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday said there will be no special Assembly session on the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG). The matter will instead be taken up during the upcoming Budget session, following the Governor's advice. Sukhu was speaking after a two-day MLAs' priority planning meeting in Shimla.

"The Governor has suggested that no special session should be convened, as his consent is not given. We will follow his advice, and RDG will be discussed during the Budget session," Sukhu said.

During the meeting, Sukhu also raised concerns over foreign apple imports. "Under free trade agreements signed by the Union government, import duty on apples has been drastically reduced. This will hurt Himachal's apple farming economy," he said. He added the state would raise the issue in appropriate forums, highlighting apple cultivation as a major contributor to local livelihoods.

Opposition BJP MLAs, led by Rakesh Jamwal, raised issues of stalled development works, non-approval of DPRs, and delays in the HP Nidhi initiative, which provides financial aid for medical treatment and marriages of poor families. Jamwal said several MLAs reported halted district schemes and unfinished construction, including roads damaged during 2023 natural disasters.

He said the government assured pending works, particularly those near completion, will be discussed in the Budget session. BJP MLAs also expressed concern over receiving government presentations at short notice and requested separate sessions to contribute constructively.

Jamwal criticized the state government for failing to present its case effectively before the Finance Commission regarding the RDG, noting that the grant was stopped for 17 states. "Blaming the BJP is not correct. The Finance Commission is autonomous," he added.

Rijiju lambasts Rahul Gandhi over frivolous rhetoric

PATNA

wUnion Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday accused Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi of indulging in "frivolous rhetoric" to stay in headlines. Speaking to reporters during a day-long tour in Patna, Rijiju said the nation has made significant progress under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and claimed that people will never again trust the Congress, which he said weakened the country during its 60 years in power.

Rijiju's remarks came in response to Gandhi citing skirmishes with Chinese forces, mentioned in a book by former Army chief M.M. Naravane, to challenge the government. "Rahul Gandhi is merely trying to remain in the headlines, but all this will prove inconsequential," he said.

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs also spoke about the disruption in the Lok Sabha ahead of the Prime Minister's planned speech on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address. He said 40-50 opposition MPs barged into Speaker Om Birla's chamber and behaved aggressively. Rijiju, who was present inside the chamber, stated that the decision was taken to prevent the Prime Minister from attending to avoid further trouble.

"We have sufficient strength in the House, but we chose not to use marshals to force the proceedings. Instead, we found a better solution," Rijiju said. He added that Prime Minister Modi did address the nation at length in the Rajya Sabha.

The minister reiterated that the government remains focused on governance and progress, while opposition tactics to create headlines would not impact the country's development agenda.

Rijiju on Saturday said 40-50 opposition MPs stormed Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's chamber and behaved aggressively ahead of Prime Minister Modi's scheduled speech. Speaking at a BJP press conference in Bihar, Rijiju, who was present in the chamber, said it was decided that the PM would stay away to avoid trouble. "We have enough strength to manage proceedings but chose a different approach to prevent conflict," he added, explaining Modi's absence during the Motion of Thanks debate.

CM STALIN SETS TARGET TO WIN 200 SEATS

VIRUDHUNAGAR

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday set an ambitious goal for the DMK ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, urging party workers to secure victory in 200 constituencies. Addressing the DMK Youth Wing Southern Zone Office-Bearers Conference, Stalin emphasized sustained grassroots campaigning, even in areas where families have not yet supported the party.

Recalling DMK's clean sweep in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Stalin said the party delivered on its promise by winning all 40 parliamentary seats and is now aiming to set a new benchmark in the state Assembly.

He framed the upcoming polls as a decisive contest between Tamil Nadu and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Stalin stressed that state autonomy and federalism remain central to DMK's ideology.

MP files plaint against Reddy over conjoined twins

NIZAMABAD

Telangana MP Arvind Dharmapuri has submitted formal complaints to the National Commission for Women and the National Human Rights Commission against Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for allegedly insensitive remarks about conjoined twins Veena and Vani.

Dharmapuri expressed concern over the comments reportedly made by Reddy during a public speech in Nizamabad on February 6. He said using a serious congenital medical condition for political comparison is deeply inappropriate and disrespects the dignity of individuals who have shown extraordinary courage and determination in overcoming social and medical challenges.

Highlighting the achievements of Veena and Vani, Dharmapuri noted that the twins have completed their Bachelor of Commerce degrees and are preparing for the Chartered Accountancy examination, one of India's most demanding professional qualifications. Their journey, he said, inspires thousands of differently-abled individuals and demonstrates resilience, intellectual strength, and hope.

The complaints urge the commissions to examine the matter thoroughly and take action under relevant laws and constitutional protections concerning dignity, equality, and human rights. Dharmapuri stressed that public representatives in constitutional positions must exercise sensitivity in speech, as their statements influence public attitudes and behavior.

He further requested that authorities ensure the protection and respect of women and individuals facing medical or physical challenges in public life.

HP apple growers announce participation in Feb strike

ROHRU

The Himachal Apple Growers' Association on Saturday decided to actively join the nationwide farmers' strike scheduled for February 12, 2026. The decision was taken during a block-level meeting in Rohru, attended by executive members from various village units and presided over by state committee member Sanjay Chauhan.

Chauhan said farmers and orchardists in the state are facing a growing crisis, citing increasing incidents of land dispossession and house sealing. He criticised the Centre's free trade agreements with multiple countries, calling them detrimental to the interests of local farmers and horticulturists.

The association also raised concerns over the proposed Seed Bill, reductions in MGNREGA funding, the installation of smart meters, and cuts to the Market Intervention Scheme. Chauhan described these policies as anti-people and stressed that a united, organised struggle was necessary to protect agricultural and horticultural livelihoods.

After detailed discussions, the meeting unanimously resolved that members would coordinate with the Himachal Kisan Sabha to ensure strong participation in the February 12 protest. Local units will mobilise farmers and orchardists, raise awareness, and highlight pressing issues affecting the sector.

Rohru block secretary Raman Tharta added that a district-level convention of the Himachal Kisan Sabha and Apple Growers' Association will be held in Shimla on February 27-28, 2026. Representatives from local rural units of Rohru and Chuhara are expected to attend.

Min highlights budget plans for next 25 years

VIJAYAWADA

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the Union Budget 2026-27 has been designed with long-term plans for the next 25 years, not just for the coming fiscal year, he emphasised discussions with social media influencers to explain the Budget and counter misinformation from the opposition.

Singh highlighted that critics claim the Budget does not benefit the middle class. "When Prime Minister Modi made 17 cancer medicines tax-free, was that not for the common man?" he asked. He added that growth in bio-manufacturing and India's leadership in biotechnology will also benefit ordinary citizens.

The Minister cited the Polavaram Project in Andhra Pradesh as another key initiative, ensuring water supply for irrigation across the state. He noted that Andhra Pradesh and other southern states are set to become hubs of the Blue Economy.

Singh also underlined employment generation outside government sectors, particularly through startups. He recalled that India had only around 350-370 startups in 2014, which has now grown to over two lakh, creating 21 lakh jobs.

He said Andhra Pradesh is expected to host world-class quantum software startups in the near future.

The Budget, Singh stressed, focuses on sustainable economic development, healthcare, job creation, and technological advancement, aiming to secure long-term benefits for India's economy and citizens. He said these initiatives demonstrate the government's vision of growth and opportunities over the next 25 years.

HP assembly 11th session from February 16

SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania on Saturday said the 11th session of the 14th Legislative Assembly will begin on February 16. The official notification was issued by the Assembly Secretariat following the Governor's recommendation.

The session will start with the Governor's address, followed by obituary references and then legislative business. The total number of sitting days has not yet been finalized. Sources said the Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG) issue will be discussed first, after which the budget session will continue. CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu stated that no special session will be called, as per the Governor's advice, and the RDG matter will be taken up during the budget session.

TRIBAL CULTURAL FEST

Bastar Pandum 2026: Murmu hails new dawn of peace

JAGDALPUR

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday inaugurated Bastar Pandum 2026, a three-day festival celebrating tribal culture, tradition, and the region's journey from violence to peace.

The event was held at Lalbagh Ground in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh, bringing together colorful displays of tribal art, rituals, music, and community life.

Addressing the gathering, President Murmu said Pandum is more than a festival; it is a way of life intertwined with nature. "When seeds are sown, it is Pandum. When mangoes ripen, it is Pandum. Every moment of life here is celebrated," she said, urging the rest of the country to learn from Bastar's harmony with nature.

She acknowledged the suffering caused by nearly four decades of Maoist insurgency but praised the Union government's efforts in weakening extremist influence. Many former militants have surrendered and are now reintegrating into society, supported by welfare programs.

President Murmu lauded the Chhattisgarh government's Niyad Nellanar Yojana, highlighting improvements in electricity, roads, drinking water, and schools. Children returning to classrooms signal a hopeful revival. She encouraged people to embrace peace, trust the Constitution, and remain vigilant against forces trying to disrupt progress.

Education was highlighted as key to development, with Eklavya Model Residential Schools expanding learning opportunities in tribal areas. She urged parents to prioritize education for a brighter future.

The President also paid tribute to Bastar's cultural heritage, referencing Bastar Dussehra and emphasizing a balance between development and tradition. She called on youth to utilize welfare schemes for personal and regional growth, contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

The ceremony saw the presence of Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka, Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, and other dignitaries, marking a new chapter of peace and progress in Bastar.

QUICK READ

Yet another moderate quake hits Myanmar

Naypyidaw

Myanmar experienced a 3.9 magnitude earthquake on Saturday, the National Center for Seismology reported. The quake occurred 85 km underground. This follows four recent tremors, including a 5.3 quake on February 3 at just 20 km depth. Shallow earthquakes like this can cause stronger shaking and more damage. Myanmar lies near four tectonic plates and the Sagaing Fault, making it prone to earthquakes and tsunamis. Cities such as Yangon, Mandalay, and Bago face high seismic risk due to dense populations and past quakes.

Taiwan tracks 6 Chinese aircraft, 7 naval ships

Taipei

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense reported six Chinese aircraft sorties and seven naval vessels near its waters on Saturday morning. Five aircraft entered Taiwan's southwestern and eastern air defense zones. On Friday, eight sorties and six vessels were spotted, with six crossing the median line. The MND said it has closely monitored the situation and responded. Taiwan continues to keep a vigilant watch over its skies and seas amid rising tensions with China.

BLA claims Phase-2 of Operation Herof

Balochistan

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) said it completed the second phase of "Operation Herof" on Friday after six days of fighting in 14 cities across Balochistan. The group claimed its fighters captured checkpoints, military sites, and city areas, forcing Pakistani forces to retreat in some locations. BLA spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch called it their "largest and most organised operation" and said 93 Baloch fighters died during the campaign, which aimed at political, psychological, and military impact.

Our ties with Malaysia scaling new heights: PM Modi

Modi highlighted that Malaysia had the second-highest Indian community in the world and placed a particular emphasis on Tamil linkages between the two nations.

KUALA LUMPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday highlighted the strong India-Malaysia relationship, describing it as guided by IMPACT—India-Malaysia Partnership for Advancing Collective Transformation.

Speaking to the Indian diaspora in Kuala Lumpur during his two-day visit, he said India's success is Malaysia's success, and together they contribute to Asia's growth. Modi appreciated Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's gestures, including congratulations on India's Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Modi outlined economic and technological cooperation, noting over 100 Indian IT companies operate in Malaysia, creating thousands of jobs. He highlighted joint initiatives, including Malaysia's first and Asia's largest insulin manufacturing facility and digital collaborations, with India's UPI soon coming to Malaysia.

Emphasizing people-to-people ties, Modi spoke of shared geography, cultural links across the Indian Ocean, and encouraged visits to India. He also described India's rapid infrastructure growth, including new airports, highways, and internationally recognized modern trains like Vande Bharat.

On India's economic transformation, Modi said the country has risen from the 11th largest economy to nearly the top three and is now the world's fastest-growing major economy.

'This special gesture reflects his love, respect for India'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday highlighted the warmth and personal rapport shared with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, saying that the latter's gesture of personally receiving him at the Kuala Lumpur airport following his arrival and sharing a car ride reflected his "love and respect for India". "The warmth of your greeting reflects the beautiful diversity of our shared culture. First of all, I thank my dear friend Anwar Ibrahim for joining the community celebration. I also thank him for his very kind words on the scale and future potential of India-Malaysia friendship in his speech just now," PM Modi said while addressing the Indian diaspora. The visit, from February 7–8, is his third to Malaysia since 2015, he added.

Trump refuses to apologise for racist Obama video

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump shared a video depicting former President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama as apes, set to "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," but insisted he had done nothing wrong.

The clip, which promoted 2020 election conspiracy theories, was deleted after 12 hours amid widespread condemnation. Speaking on Air Force One, Trump claimed he had only seen part of the video and suggested a staffer may have posted it.

Criticism came from both Democrats and Republicans. Sen. Tim Scott called it "the most racist thing" he had seen from the White House. Other GOP leaders urged Trump to apologise. The White House initially downplayed the post, with press secretary Karoline Leavitt calling the outrage "fake."

The video echoes a pattern of Trump promoting offensive imagery targeting Black Americans. Presidential historian Douglas Brinkley said it used "the oldest trope against Black people imaginable." Trump has previously shared AI-generated content targeting Obama and other political opponents.

President Trump posted a racist video of the Obamas but declined to apologise, sparking outrage from Democrats and some Republicans over offensive AI-generated content

Despite pressure, Trump did not issue an apology, prompting debate about his use of social media and AI to spread controversial content. The incident highlights tensions even within his party and raises concerns about the normalization of racist digital media.

EU-India launch talks on Horizon Europe Assn

BRUSSELS

The European Union and India have begun talks on India's possible association with Horizon Europe, the EU's flagship research and innovation program with a budget of €95.5 billion for 2021–2027. European Commissioner for Startups, Research, and Innovation Ekaterina Zaharieva said, "Science works best when borders do not get in the way of ideas. Connecting talent, ambition, and trust will allow us to build solutions together globally." This initiative follows the 16th EU-India Summit, where leaders pledged to strengthen cooperation in trade, security, and science. Association with Horizon Europe would give India the "closest form of international cooperation" offered to non-EU countries. Currently, Indian researchers participate under a Co-Funding Mechanism, securing funding from Indian ministries while joining EU projects. If the new agreement is finalised, Indian institutions could receive grants directly from the European Commission. Indian scientists could lead and coordinate international research consortia and participate on equal terms with EU member states, contributing financially to the program's budget. The Joint EU-India Comprehensive Strategic Agenda Towards 2030 highlights research and innovation as central to their strategic partnership. Recent collaboration through the EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) and Commissioner Zaharieva's visit to India strengthened links between research and innovation ecosystems on both sides.

US seeks to end conflict in Ukraine by summer: Zelensky

KYIV

The United States is urging Russia and Ukraine to find a solution to end the ongoing war before summer, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Saturday.

Washington has proposed a new round of talks in Miami next week, and Kyiv has agreed to participate. Zelenskiy added that the U.S. may pressure both sides to meet this timeline, noting that political priorities such as midterm Congressional elections could influence their approach.

Earlier talks in Abu Dhabi did not result in a major breakthrough but allowed both sides to agree on exchanging 157 prisoners of war each. Zelenskiy said these swaps will continue. Military teams also discussed technical details on monitoring a potential ceasefire, security guarantees for Ukraine, and a "prosperity plan" outlining postwar economic recovery.

Zelenskiy said Ukraine had suggested a sequencing plan for negotiations, though he did not provide specific details. He also mentioned reports from intelligence sources indicating that Russia's special envoy, Kirill Dmitriev, proposed cooperation deals with the United States worth up to $12 trillion. Zelenskiy stressed that any agreements between Russia and the U.S. cannot violate Ukraine's constitution.

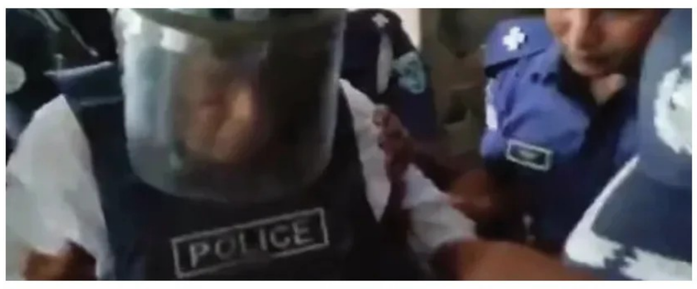
The Ukrainian president's comments confirm earlier reports on the proposed summer timeline. As the war continues, officials emphasize that diplomatic talks, prisoner swaps, and economic discussions remain crucial to finding a lasting resolution to the largest conflict in Europe since World War Two.

Ex-Bangladesh minister Ramesh Chandra Sen dies in custody

DHAKA

Former Bangladesh Minister and senior Awami League leader Ramesh Chandra Sen died on Saturday after reportedly falling ill in police custody at Dinajpur District Jail, officials confirmed. Sen's death has sparked fresh concerns over custodial deaths and alleged political targeting under the interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus.

Sen, who served as Water Resources Minister and represented Thakurgaon-1 constituency, was pronounced dead at 9:29 a.m. at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, he became unwell early Saturday and was rushed to the hospital around 9:10 a.m. after his condition deteriorated. Jail authorities confirmed that he had been arrested on August 16 last year and was facing three cases, including one related to murder.



Dinajpur District Jail Superintendent Farhad Sarkar stated that Sen's body would be handed to his family after completion of legal formalities. Born on April 30, 1940, in Kashalgaon village, Thakurgaon, Sen was educated at Rangpur Carmichael College and entered politics at an early age. He was elected to Parliament five times and was a praesidium member of the Awami League, reflecting his seniority within the party.

Sen's parliamentary role ended abruptly after the fall of the Awami League government in 2024, following a student and public uprising. President Mohammad Sahabuddin dissolved the National Parliament, leading to loss of membership for Sen and other Awami League lawmakers.

Rights groups and activists have called for impartial investigations into custodial deaths and political detentions. They stressed that transparent probes are vital to hold authorities accountable, uphold legal safeguards, and restore public trust in Bangladesh's justice system. Sen's death adds to growing concerns about the treatment of political detainees and the safety of opposition leaders in the country.

Poll could shift Bangladesh towards Islamist direction

TEL AVIV

As Bangladesh prepares for elections on February 12, the outcome could determine whether the country moves toward stability, prolonged uncertainty, or a new ideological path, a report from Times of Israel highlighted. The future will depend on how the next government governs, whether it is inclusive, and if it learns from past mistakes.

With the Awami League banned, the contest is now largely between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the radical Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami. The BNP, which governed in the past, is associated with corruption, weak institutions, and reliance on Islamist allies. Many voters question if it has truly changed.

Jamaat-e-Islami, once isolated for its ideology and its alignment with Pakistan during the 1971 Liberation War, has regained strength since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government in 2024. The party presents itself as disciplined, honest, and close to religious values. Its organisational strength in some regions surpasses that of weakened secular parties. Supporters see it as offering moral leadership and cleaner governance, while secular citizens and minorities view its rise with concern.

If Jamaat and allies gain power, Bangladesh may not become a religious state, but public debate could shift conservatively. Minorities may feel insecure, and women's rights and secular education could face pressure. Internationally, Bangladesh might adopt a colder stance toward India and Western countries while maintaining practical ties with China and others. The country could also become more vocal in Islamist international forums.

The report warned that a hung parliament or disputed results could be the most dangerous outcome, with protests, political violence, and possible military intervention as a power broker. Overall, the election's results will shape both Bangladesh's domestic stability and its role on the global stage.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	5		2		9		8	
7		3		5		9		1
9		2	1		7		6	
3	7			1			9	
	1		9		8		3	
2		8	3		5	4		7
	6			8			5	
5		1	6		4	3		8
8				2			4	

2	3	4	1	5	8	6	9	7
9	5	6	4	7	3	1	8	2
1	7	8	2	6	9	4	3	5
6	4	3	9	2	5	7	1	8
8	2	5	7	4	6	3	2	9
7	2	9	3	8	1	5	6	4
5	9	2	6	3	7	8	4	1
3	8	1	5	9	4	2	7	6
4	6	7	8	1	2	9	5	3

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

VACCINE COST CRISIS

Lack of access to cost-effective Indian vaccines straining Pak economy: Min

KARACHI

The stoppage of cost-effective vaccines from India after the May 2025 conflict has put Pakistan's economy under pressure, Health Minister Mustafa Kamal said on Saturday. Pakistan previously procured affordable vaccines through GAVI, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, which provides vaccines to children in low-income countries.

Currently, Pakistan imports vaccines at an annual cost of around $400 million, with 49 percent funded by international organisations via GAVI. The remaining 51 percent is paid by Pakistan. Kamal warned that without local production, the annual import bill could rise to $1.2 billion by 2031, as international support is set to end.

GAVI played a key role in supplying high-quality vaccines from Indian pharmaceutical companies, even during tense India-Pakistan relations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it helped Pakistan secure millions of vaccines under the COVAX facility. Despite this, none of Pakistan's 13 free vaccines are produced locally.

Pakistan, the world's fifth most populous country with nearly 240 million people and 6.2 million annual births, faces rising vaccine demand. Kamal said international assistance has kept costs manageable so far, but domestic production is essential to avoid future economic strain.

Preparatory work for local vaccine production has begun, aiming for self-sufficiency in the near future. The government hopes this step will reduce dependency on imports, lower costs, and ensure continued access to essential vaccines for the population.

QUICK READ

TRV international airport soars to new heights

Thiruvananthapuram
TRV (Kerala) International Airport Limited, the operator of Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, achieved two significant passenger traffic milestones in January 2026, marking a major step forward in the airport's growth trajectory. TRV Airport is managed by TRV (Kerala) International Airport Limited (TIAL), a special purpose vehicle under Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL). AAHL is a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, the flagship incubator of the Adani Group. The airport recorded its highest ever monthly passenger traffic, handling 450,090 passengers during the month. The daily average passenger traffic also crossed the 15,000 mark, reflecting sustained growth in travel demand through the gateway.

US deal to play pivotal role in India achieving $100 bn exports

New Delhi
The India-US trade agreement is expected to play a pivotal role in India achieving its intended target of $100 billion textiles exports in 2030, the government said on Saturday. The deal is expected to provide the requisite momentum, with the US to contribute to more than one-fifth of this target, according to Ministry of Textiles. The ministry welcomed the landmark agreement between India and the US as a major catalyst enhancing the textile trade relations between the nations. The textile industry expressed the hope that this is a major economic game changer for the sector.

Pak policy squeezes productive few to fund a 'bloated' bureaucracy

New Delhi
Suffering from a profound identity crisis, Pakistan has thrown tax burden onto a population that receives the public services of a medieval fiefdom, according to a new report. A report in Business Recorder reveals that Pakistan's fiscal policy remains obsessed with squeezing the productive few to fund a bloated, unproductive bureaucracy. We are not a welfare state; we lack the institutional nervous system, the documentation, and the moral contract to sustain one, it adds. According to the report, the country has only 3.4 million effective taxpayers a mere 4 per cent of the 85.6 million-strong workforce funding the entire state.

INDIA-US TRADE DEAL

Several Indian goods, including agri, will have zero reciprocal tariff: Goyal

'We have not included any item where any Indian farmer will be hurt. All sensitive items have been kept out of the deal. No GM items will enter India'

NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal while talking on India-US Interim Trade Agreement on Saturday said several Indian goods will have zero reciprocal tariff, including agri products, addressed a press conference.

Addressing the media here, he said that the pact with US will not hurt interests of Indians farmers, MSMEs, handicraft, handlooms in any way. "We have not included any item where any Indian farmer will be hurt. All sensitive items have been kept out of the deal. No GM items will enter India," he added.

He mentioned that India has fully protected sensitive agricultural and dairy products such as maize, wheat, rice, soya, poultry, milk, cheese, ethanol (fuel), tobacco, certain vegetables and meat, as no duty concessions have been granted to the US on certain goods under the trade agreement.

POINTS TO BE NOTED

- Tariffs has gone to 18 per cent from 50 per cent. He clarifies that India's tariffs are lowest in the neighbourhood.
- Zero per cent duty on diamonds, pharmaceuticals and smart phones will be applicable. Moreover, spice, tea, coffee, coconut oil, vegetable wax, cashew nut, chestnut and other fruits and vegetables, avocados, bananas, pineapple, mushroom among others will also have zero per cent duty.
- India has imposed a minimum import price (MIP) of Rs 80 per kg and an import duty of 25 per cent on apples from the US under the proposed India-US trade pact, which is expected to be signed by mid-March.
- US will not get any relief on products like Meat, dairy, soyabean, rice, wheat, sugar, millet, banana, strawberry, cherry, green peas, and moong.
- Jewellery and apparel industry will get major boost, and no tariffs on these products. India has not given any duty concessions on any dairy product, sugar, millets to US either.
- Items benefiting from duty-free access include dried distillers' grains (DDGS) for animal husbandry, wines, spirits, and other alcoholic beverages, medicines for cancer patients, cosmetics, organic and inorganic chemicals, computer products, and medical devices.
- All those products on which we are 'aatma nirbhar' have been kept out of the agreement.

'No compromise on farmers' interests'

Piyush Goyal firmly asserted that India has not made any concessions affecting sensitive agricultural sectors under the India–US Interim Agreement. He said, "Farmers' interests remain paramount and that core areas such as grains, fruits, vegetables, spices, oilseeds, dairy, poultry, and meat have been completely safeguarded."
"Several Indian products will now enter the US market with zero duty, including tea, spices, coconut oil, vegetable wax, areca nut, Brazil nuts, chestnuts, and a wide range of fruits and vegetables. This preferential treatment will directly benefit farmers and agri-based exporters by making Indian produce more competitive," he added.

Deal draws mixed reactions

NEW DELHI

When Donald Trump officially confirmed the long-awaited bilateral trade deal, immediately reducing American tariffs on Indian goods from 25 per cent to 18 per cent, and Narendra Modi corroborated the announcement, reactions across India were mixed. Even before India awoke on Saturday, news had already broken of a US–India Joint Statement announcing an Interim Agreement, setting the tone for intense political and economic debate.

The interim framework is designed to pave the way for a broader US-India Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), negotiations for which were launched by President Trump and Prime Minister Modi on February 13 last year. The breakthrough followed months of tense negotiations and was reportedly sealed after a telephone conversation with Modi that preceded Trump's public announcement on February 2.

Financial markets welcomed the development, with investors buoyed by the fact that the United States remains India's largest trading partner. However, concerns surfaced simultaneously, particularly among sections of the farming community. Initial scepticism over whether the deal would materialise has now given way to suspicion that domestic interests, especially agriculture, could be compromised—despite the final agreement still being under negotiation.

Supporters have described the interim pact as the father of all deals, coming just a week after India concluded what has been termed a mother-of-all trade agreement with the European Union. Proponents argue the US deal will place India at a competitive advantage globally and help stabilise Washington–New Delhi relations at a critical juncture.

At 18 per cent, India's tariff position is marginally better than those applied to several ASEAN economies and South Asian neighbours such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, which face reciprocal tariffs in the 19–20 per cent range. Sectors expected to benefit include textiles, footwear, light manufacturing, and engineering goods.

Nonetheless, apprehensions remain about the perceived opening of trade gates to farm and dairy products. According to the joint statement, India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a broad range of food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains, red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fruits, soybean oil, wine, and spirits.

Ruling parties hail pact as major boost for economy, exporters

NEW DELHI

Leaders from India's ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Saturday welcomed the interim trade agreement finalised between United States and India, calling it a significant milestone for Indian exporters, small industries, farmers, and workers. The agreement lowers US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent, a move leaders said would enhance the competitiveness of Indian products in global markets.

Several NDA leaders highlighted the timing of the agreement, noting that it follows closely on the heels of what they described as a landmark trade arrangement concluded between India and the European Union. According to them, the new trade framework with the United States signals India's growing influence in global trade negotiations and reflects the country's strengthening economic position.

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal welcomed the development, emphasising that India is actively expanding its trade relationships worldwide. We are entering into Free Trade Agreements with many countries. This will bring investment and give momentum to our economy. We welcome all such trade deals and thank those who have worked to make them happen, Meghwal said, underlining the government's focus on trade-led growth.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan echoed similar sentiments, asserting that India's economy is currently in a strong position. He pointed to a series of recent trade negotiations as evidence of expanding global partnerships. India's economy is in a strong position. We have signed trade deals with many countries, and recently concluded talks with New Zealand, the UK, and the US. India's industries and businesses will receive a significant boost, Pradhan said.

Shiv Sena leader Shaina NC congratulated Narendra Modi, stating that the agreement reflects the government's approach of combining diplomacy with national interest. She said the deal would benefit imports, exports, and the 'Make in India' initiative, adding that more such successes are likely to follow. Another Shiv Sena leader, Sanjay Nirupam, said the reduction in tariffs was the outcome of sustained negotiations with the US administration.

US senators call for a probe into Elon Musk-led SpaceX

WASHINGTON

Two US Democratic senators, Elizabeth Warren (from Massachusetts) and Andy Kim (from New Jersey), have reportedly urged the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct a review of billionaire Elon Musk-led SpaceX. The senators alleged that Chinese investors have secretly acquired stakes in the aerospace maker, The Hill Reported.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, the legislators raised concerns about SpaceX, a major contractor for the DOD. They also cited recently unsealed court records and a ProPublica investigation from March.

These ties could pose a national security threat, potentially jeopardising key military, intelligence, and civilian infrastructure, and are at odds with the administration's policies on foreign investment from countries of concern in strategic industries, the senators wrote.

A SpaceX investor, in testimony that was unsealed in October last year, shared that the company had been aware of potential Chinese investment since 2015.

As per the ProPublica report, SpaceX allows Chinese investors to buy stakes in the company through offshore accounts.

The investigation also covered SpaceX executives' decision to cancel a $50 million investment in the company's stock from a Chinese firm after news of the deal broke.

The senators said the extent to which the DOD depends on SpaceX provides even greater reason for concern. The company has billions of dollars in contracts with the department, including a $5.9 billion launch service contract, the report said.

The mere proposition that an adversary nation such as China could have leverage and influence over a company such as SpaceX, one that underpins our national security apparatus, is an unacceptable risk, the senators wrote.

Both Warren and Kim also expressed specific concerns that the Chinese investors might use their influence to gain information about non-public company information to undermine US national security.

$1.3 bn US investment in Baloch mines raises deeper questions

BALOCHISTAN

The Donald Trump administration has unveiled 'Project Vault,' a $12 billion critical mineral reserve building exercise to challenge China's dominance, which includes a $1.3 billion investment in Reko Diq mines in Balochistan. This is the only international project financed under the initiative, operated under the Export-Import Bank (EXIM).

Reko Diq contains some of the world's largest untapped copper and gold deposits. As per industry estimates, the site's reserves at around 5.9 billion tonnes of ore, including roughly 41.5 million ounces of gold.

The US State Department said the investment is intended to reshape the global market for critical minerals and rare earths, which directly challenges China's dominance in the rare earths sector.

China currently controls more than 90 per cent of global refined rare earth output. However, Balochistan has long been affected by insurgency and is currently witnessing heightened violence against the state. Reko Diq sits at the centre of this unrest, with security risks worsening since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.

For the Baloch population, it feels like yet another moment when the world chooses minerals over human lives, according to a recent article in EU Today.

The article points out that Balochistan remains one of the most militarised and politically suppressed regions in South Asia. For decades, Balochistan has witnessed enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, mass arrests, and operations carried out by Pakistan's armed forces that have devastated entire communities.

In an environment where human rights are trampled, the claim of consent for large-scale mining projects by the so-called provincial government becomes deeply questionable, the article stated.

The article highlighted that any talk of development has no meaning when people do not have any democratic rights and have to live under the surveillance of a repressive regime. This is why US and other foreign investments in Reko Diq raise serious ethical concerns. Without binding human rights conditions, transparency, and independent monitoring, such financing risks turning international actors into silent partners in repression, it stated.

INCLUSIVE AI THE MOTO

AI must empower citizens, not replace them: IndiaAI Mission CEO

NEW DELHI

The upcoming India AI Impact Summit will bring together nations, innovators, and citizens to shape an inclusive and responsible Artificial Intelligence ecosystem, according to Abhishek Singh, CEO of the IndiaAI Mission. The summit is scheduled to be held in Delhi from February 19 to 20.

Speaking during the latest episode of Digital India – Ask Our Experts, Singh said the India AI Impact Summit will move beyond purely technical conversations and function as

a people-centric platform. He explained that the focus will be on how ordinary citizens can practically use AI to improve their lives, spanning areas such as education, healthcare, agriculture, governance, startups, services, and employment.

Artificial Intelligence is not meant to replace people; it is meant to empower them, Singh said. The India AI Impact Summit is about helping citizens understand how AI can improve daily life, create new opportunities, and make India future-ready. He added that the summit reflects India's effort to ensure AI innovation translates into real-world benefits for society.

Singh emphasised that through the summit, India aims to shift the global AI discourse from intention to measurable impact. He noted that the initiative seeks to make AI innovation, skills, and benefits accessible to all, with particular emphasis on countries of the Global South. According to him, India is positioning itself as a voice for equitable AI adoption on the global stage.

Highlighting practical applications, Singh said AI could help farmers improve crop planning and productivity, enable doctors to deliver faster and more accurate diagnoses, and support teachers with personalised learning tools. He added that AI can assist small businesses and startups in scaling efficiently, while also helping job seekers identify emerging career paths.

Addressing widespread concerns about job losses, Singh clarified that AI is not about replacing humans but augmenting human capabilities. While certain tasks will change, AI is expected to create new jobs, new skills, and new opportunities—especially for India's youth, professionals, researchers, and entrepreneurs, he said. He encouraged citizens to prioritise continuous learning, adaptability, and AI literacy rather than fear disruption.

Webster's Late Burst Puts Tasmania on Brink of Crucial Sheffield Shield Win

SYDNEY

Beau Webster bent his back and delivered when it mattered most, puncturing Western Australia's stubborn resistance late on day three as Tasmania edged closer to a vital Sheffield Shield victory. In a contest carrying major implications for the lower half of the table, Tasmania seized momentum with a decisive burst after Western Australia briefly threatened an unlikely turnaround.

Chasing a daunting 345 runs in the fourth innings, Western Australia showed rare grit, a welcome sign for a batting order that has struggled throughout the season. Captain Sam Whiteman led from the front alongside Cameron Bancroft, the pair putting on a defiant 116-run opening stand that temporarily shifted the pressure back onto Tasmania. Their partnership, built on patience and disciplined shot selection, suggested the WACA surface had eased considerably after two days of difficult batting conditions.

> Beau Webster's late spell broke Western Australia's resolve as Tasmania tightened control in a must-win Shield clash.

However, just as hope began to build, familiar issues resurfaced. Webster struck to remove Whiteman, triggering a collapse that saw Western Australia lose four wickets for just 39 runs. The sudden slide underlined Tasmania's growing authority and highlighted the fragility that has plagued the home side's campaign. With the breakthrough secured, Tasmania surged firmly back into the box seat, knowing an outright win is essential to revive their season.

Aaron Hardie and Teague Wyllie steadied the innings through the final hour, combining composure with careful defence to ensure Western Australia survived the day. Their resistance offered a glimmer of hope, particularly with the WACA pitch appearing less menacing as the match wore on. Still, the task ahead remains steep, with Tasmania's bowlers sensing an opportunity to finish the job early on the final day.

Earlier, Tasmania had made Western Australia toil for more than an hour to claim the final wicket of their second innings. Bancroft and Whiteman then negotiated a testing 35-minute spell before lunch, emerging largely unscathed and setting the platform for the opening stand.

With both Tasmania and Western Australia languishing at the bottom of the ladder, the equation is simple: only an outright win will keep either side in touch with the pointy end of the Sheffield Shield standings. As day four looms, Tasmania hold the upper hand, but Western Australia's late resistance ensures the contest is not yet done.

SHANAKA Pins WC Hopes on Friendlier Pitches After Years

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka believes improved World Cup pitches could revive his batting and ease long-standing team frustrations.

Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka enters the World Cup carrying familiar concerns, chief among them the nature of pitches his side has been forced to play on for years. While witty references to pop culture may frame the discussion lightly, the underlying issue remains serious: Sri Lanka's captains have long argued that excessively spin-friendly surfaces at home have stunted batting development and skewed match dynamics. For several seasons, pitches on the island have offered substantial assistance to spinners, particularly through the middle overs. While this has produced low-scoring, attritional contests and strengthened Sri Lanka's spin resources, it has also depressed batting totals and limited opportunities for aggressive stroke-play. Shanaka, like his predecessors, has repeatedly voiced frustration that such conditions make it difficult for batters to express themselves or build confidence in longer formats.

The concern comes at a delicate time. Sri Lanka arrive at the World Cup on the back of a bruising 3–0 home series defeat to England, a result that underlined their recent struggles. Shanaka's own contributions with the bat in that series were modest, managing scores of 20 off 16 balls, followed by innings of 1 and 4. Those returns only intensified scrutiny of his role as a finisher and leader.

However, Shanaka is optimistic that the World Cup will offer a different challenge altogether. According to the Sri Lankan captain, directives from the ICC to groundstaff could result in more balanced surfaces. I think in this World Cup the ICC has told the groundstaff that they have to leave a certain amount of grass on the pitch, Shanaka explained. Because of that, I think the number of dismissals will fall.

For Shanaka personally, improved pitches represent more than just better team results. He believes they may finally allow him to showcase his natural power-hitting ability, something he feels has been muted on turning tracks. Eventually, I'd like to get a good track on which to show how I can bat, he said, adding that it is harder to showcase my striking ability on turning wickets. He also acknowledged the perception issue, noting that lots of people see me negatively because of this.

ICC Criticises Pakistan Boycott as Political Tensions Cast Long Shadow

ISLAMABAD

Following Pakistan's announcement that it will boycott its forthcoming T20I World Cup match against India, the International Cricket Council moved swiftly to express its disapproval. In a strongly worded statement, the ICC said Pakistan's decision was not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, lamenting the position the Pakistan Cricket Board had placed supporters in.

The governing body made special reference to millions in Pakistan who would now be denied one of cricket's most anticipated fixtures.

In justifying its stance, the ICC leaned heavily on the language of fairness and equality. References to the integrity and sanctity of the World Cup and the neutrality and fairness expected of global tournaments featured prominently, echoing similar reasoning used a week earlier when the ICC issued an ultimatum to the Bangladesh Cricket Board. That dispute ultimately led to Bangladesh's exit from the tournament, a move that further exposed the fragile balance between cricket administration and geopolitics.

Australia Young Quick Mahli Beardman Faces Lengthy Layoff

SYDNEY

Australia's exciting young pace prospect Mahli Beardman has suffered a major setback just days after launching his international career, with scans confirming a recurrence of a stress fracture in his lower back. The injury is expected to rule the 20-year-old out for an extended period, dealing a heavy blow to both player and selectors who had been closely monitoring his rapid rise.

Beardman made his Twenty20 International debut against Pakistan on January 29 in Lahore, where he impressed despite Australia's 22-run defeat. Bowling with pace and confidence, he returned figures of 2 for 33 from four overs, backing up a breakout Big Bash League campaign that had thrust him into the national spotlight.

However, his momentum was abruptly halted when he reported soreness in his lower back during the warm-up ahead of the second match of the series and was withdrawn as a precaution.

The youngster did not feature in the final game and underwent scans upon returning to Perth last week. Those scans revealed another stress fracture in his lower back, understood to be a recurrence of an injury he suffered last year. That earlier issue had already delayed his start to the domestic season, making this latest diagnosis particularly frustrating for both Beardman and team management.

Adding to his injury history, Beardman had also battled osteitis pubis symptoms in his groin during the pre-season.

While those issues were managed successfully, allowing him to remain fully fit throughout the BBL, the recurrence of a back stress fracture raises concerns about workload management at such an early stage of his career.

CCL 2026 Champions Karnataka Bulldozers bring the cup back home!

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Bulldozers who have officially reclaimed their throne as the kings of the Celebrity Cricket League (CCL) 2026, clinching their third historic title after a 12-year wait, brought the championship cup back home.

> *This win is for our fans who never stopped believing in us, says Captain Kichcha Sudeep*

Addressing a press conference post the victory, Kichcha Sudeep, Team Captain, Karnataka Bulldozers said, "I've always said that for us, this isn't just a tournament; it's an emotion. To lead this group of great players and finally bring the cup home after more than a decade is a feeling I can't put into words. Watching the entire team execute our plans under pressure was a treat. This win is for our fans who never stopped believing in us through the dry years. 'Ee Sala Cup Namde' is no longer just a slogan—it's a reality!"

Commenting on the stupendous victory, Mr. Ashok Kheny, Managing Director of AKK Entertainment and owner of the team said, "This victory is a testament to the 'Bulldozer spirit'—relentless, powerful, and unwavering. After 12 long years and several close finishes, seeing the trophy return to Karnataka is an emotional moment for all of us at AKK Entertainment. We didn't just play to win; we played for the pride of Sandalwood. I am incredibly proud of how this squad under Sudeep's leadership has stayed united and focused. The roar of the Bulldozers is back, and it's louder than ever!"

Pramod Madushan Replaces Injured Eshan Malinga in Sri Lanka's T20

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka have been forced into an early squad adjustment ahead of the T20 World Cup, with Pramod Madushan named as a replacement for injured seamer Eshan Malinga. Malinga's participation in the tournament had been under a cloud since he dislocated his shoulder during the second T20I against England earlier this month.

The injury occurred in unfortunate circumstances following a rain interruption. Bowling the first delivery after play resumed, Malinga immediately clutched his non-bowling shoulder after releasing the ball, collapsed during his follow-through, and was unable to continue. He subsequently missed the third and final T20I of the series, with medical assessments confirming the seriousness of the injury and effectively ending his World Cup hopes.

Malinga's absence is a significant blow for Sri Lanka, given his rising stature within the squad.

The young pacer had earned a promotion up the seam-bowling pecking order after a strong showing in the Indian Premier League in 2025, where his pace and variations caught the eye. Since making his T20I debut in November last year, he has featured in eight matches, claiming eight wickets at an economy rate of 9.41.

While those numbers underline his attacking intent, his ability to strike at key moments had made him an increasingly important part of Sri Lanka's white-ball plans.

Stepping into the squad is Pramod Madushan, a familiar figure who brings both experience and control.

Madushan has also played eight T20 Internationals, having made his debut in 2022 and last featuring in the format in 2023.

FAHEEM RESCUES PAKISTAN

FAHEEM ASHRAF'S Late Fireworks Save Pakistan After Netherlands Scare

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan survived a major scare at the Twenty20 World Cup as Faheem Ashraf produced a blistering late cameo to seal a nervy three-wicket victory over the Netherlands in their crucial Group A encounter. What appeared to be a routine chase turned into a tense affair, with Pakistan only crossing the line with three balls to spare after a spirited all-round effort from the Dutch side.

Asked to bat first on Saturday, the Netherlands showed intent and discipline at Colombo's Sinhalese Sports Club Ground, pushing Pakistan's bowlers hard through the middle overs. The Dutch reached 100 in the 13th over and looked well placed for a competitive total. However, a dramatic collapse in the death overs proved costly. From a position of promise, they lost six wickets in just 24 balls, adding only 20 runs in that phase to be bowled out for 147 with one delivery remaining.

Pakistan's bowlers ensured the damage was limited, but the chase that followed was far from convincing. Despite the modest target, Pakistan struggled to build sustained partnerships, allowing the Netherlands to sense a famous upset. Tight bowling and sharp fielding kept the pressure firmly on the favourites, who found themselves in trouble as wickets continued to fall.

The turning point came when Max O'Dowd spilled a crucial catch offered by Faheem Ashraf. That single error proved decisive. Given a second chance, Faheem launched a ferocious counterattack, smashing 29 not out from just 11 deliveries. His clean striking under pressure swung momentum back Pakistan's way and ultimately dragged them over the finish line.

The win was vital for Pakistan, who have little margin for error in their bid to reach the Super 8 stage of the tournament. Pakistan's campaign has already been complicated by their decision to boycott their February 15 group match against archrivals India, making victories against lower-ranked opponents absolutely essential.

While Pakistan secured the points, the performance raised concerns about their batting depth and composure in pressure situations. In contrast, Netherlands emerged with plenty of credit, pushing one of the tournament heavyweights to the brink.

Books Want Patriots Upset, Seahawks Draw Most Bets

Las Vegas sportsbooks are quietly backing the Patriots, hoping a close Super Bowl disrupts heavy betting on Seattle.

LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas sportsbooks may be in the business of numbers rather than narratives, but heading into Sunday's Super Bowl, they have a clear preference. Oddsmakers would like to see the New England Patriots either upset or at least stay close to the Seattle Seahawks, not for romance or rivalry, but to keep profits healthy.

The Seahawks enter the NFL's championship game in Santa Clara, California, riding a formidable nine-game winning streak. That momentum has translated directly into betting confidence. Seattle are installed as 4.5-point favourites, while New England arrive seeking a record seventh Super Bowl title. Early wagering patterns suggest the public is firmly backing the hotter team. Online sportsbook BetMGM has reported that around 60% of Super Bowl bets placed so far are on the Seahawks. While the majority of wagers traditionally come in closer to kickoff, that early tilt is enough to shape sportsbook sentiment.

We are rooting for the Patriots, said John Ewing, BetMGM's PR Manager of Media Insights. If the Patriots cover the spread, that's great. If they win outright, that's even better. From a bookmaker's perspective, a New England result would balance liabilities and soften the financial impact of a Seahawks-heavy betting market.

The Super Bowl remains the crown jewel of American sports betting, generating an annual wagering surge unmatched by any other single event. According to the American Gaming Association, a record $1.76 billion is expected to be legally wagered in the United States on Sunday's game, underlining how deeply betting has become woven into the sport's biggest showcase.

Despite the massive sums involved, this year's matchup has not generated the same cultural buzz as last season. In 2024, the Kansas City Chiefs were chasing history while enjoying added spotlight thanks to Taylor Swift cheering on tight end Travis Kelce. That campaign ended with the Philadelphia Eagles denying the Chiefs a third straight title, delivering drama both on and off the field.

This year's Super Bowl may lack the same celebrity-fuelled hype, but for sportsbooks, the stakes are just as high.

As kickoff approaches, bookmakers will be watching closely, hoping the Patriots can keep it tight—and keep the cash registers ringing.

Boos Greet Israel Team and JD Vance at Milano Cortina 2026

MILAN

Israel's Olympic delegation and U.S. Vice President JD Vance faced boos during an otherwise festive Milano Cortina opening ceremony.

Israel's Olympic team received a mixed reception at the opening ceremony of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics as a smattering of boos rippled through the stadium during the parade of nations. Moments later, U.S. Vice President JD Vance was met with a similar reaction, briefly puncturing what had otherwise been an upbeat celebration marking the start of the global winter sports spectacle. The four-member Israeli delegation entered the San Siro Stadium waving the national flag and smiling as they took part in the traditional march of athletes. While boos could be heard from sections of the crowd, they were quickly drowned out by the loud music accompanying the ceremony, allowing the team to continue without visible disruption. A comparable moment followed when the spotlight turned to the United States contingent. Cheers for the large U.S. team shifted to boos when Vance appeared on the stadium's giant screen, highlighting the political undertones that have increasingly intersected with major international sporting events.

The reaction to Vance did not come as a surprise to organisers or observers. Political unrest in the United States over federal immigration enforcement has spilled beyond its borders, fuelling protests in Italy during the lead-up to the Games. Demonstrations have been particularly focused on opposition to policies associated with the Trump administration, which have drawn criticism from activist groups across Europe.

The backlash intensified following reports that analysts linked to a branch under U.S. Immigration and Customs.

BOSTON

CELTICS RALLY FROM 22 DOWN TO EDGE HEAT AS BROWN

A furious second-half surge lifted the Boston Celtics to one of their most impressive victories of the season, as they erased a 22-point deficit to defeat the visiting Miami Heat 98–96. The comeback victory extended Boston's winning streak to five games and showcased the depth and resilience of a team finding momentum at the right time. Jaylen Brown led the charge with 29 points, attacking the rim aggressively and setting the tone during Boston's revival. He was well supported by Payton Pritchard, who poured in 24 points and provided a vital spark off the bench. Derrick White added 21 points, including the decisive three-pointer with 1:31 remaining that put the Celtics ahead 98–96 for good.

LONDON

British Curling Stars Invite Lando Norris to Try the Real Thing After 'Baby Curling' Strugglesw

British curling duo Jennifer Dodds and Bruce Mouat have extended a light-hearted but genuine invitation to Lando Norris, encouraging the McLaren star to swap the racetrack for the curling rink after watching him struggle with a miniature version of their sport.

he exchange began after McLaren shared a video on social media showing Norris attempting baby curling. The Formula One champion's lack of success with the scaled-down game quickly caught the attention of Dodds, a self-confessed F1 fan, who saw an opportunity to blend two very different sporting worlds. Speaking after a victory over Canadian duo Brett Gallant and Jocelyn Peterman, Dodds offered Norris some professional encouragement.

KOLKATA

A good start is all we're after, says Hope after WI's winning start to campaign

West Indies skipper Shai Hope hailed his side's strong start to the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup campaign with a 35-run win over Scotland at Eden Gardens and credited Shimron Hetmyer's fluent 64, as well as Romario Shepherd's match-turning spell of 5-20, including a hat-trick. "There's no margin for error in these tournaments. It's not like a bilateral series where you've got another game to get back into the series if you come up on the losing end, but a good start is all we're after. We felt we probably could have gone a little bit more, especially here in Eden Gardens. t's a chasing ground. I think the first score was 190 or something. So it was a bit challenging to start.

NHL Stars Arrive in Milan as Olympic Ice Hockey Returns After 12-Year Absence

PRAGUE

The world's top ice hockey players are back on the Olympic stage, with NHL stars touching down in Italy ahead of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics. Five days before competition begins, players faced long flights, jet lag, and compressed recovery schedules as the National Hockey League officially entered its Olympic break.

The National Hockey League paused its season, freeing dozens of players to travel to Milan and surrounding venues. The move marks the first time in 12 years that NHL athletes have been permitted to compete at the Olympics, ending a lengthy absence that began after the 2014 Games.

Among the earliest arrivals was Czech goaltender Lukas Dostal, who wasted little time getting on the ice despite clear signs of travel fatigue. Of course, I'm jet lagged, Dostal said after becoming the first NHL player to practice at the Santagiulia Arena. The Anaheim Ducks netminder arrived in Milan late Thursday night, benefiting from a head start after his club played its final game on Tuesday.

I didn't have much time to see around because I got here last night, Dostal explained. I just went to my room, got some dinner, slept, and came straight here. His comments reflected a broader theme among players prioritising rest and preparation over sightseeing as they transition quickly from NHL competition to international duty.

Other national teams are also beginning to assemble. A representative for Switzerland confirmed that six Swiss players were arriving including three from the New Jersey Devils, who had been in action as recently as Thursday night. The staggered arrivals underline the logistical challenge of synchronising NHL schedules with Olympic preparation.

One of Switzerland's most prominent arrivals, Nino Niederreiter of the Winnipeg Jets, was immediately thrust into the spotlight. Niederreiter was designated as Switzerland's flag-bearer for the Opening Ceremony just hours after landing in Italy, a testament to his leadership role within the squad. As teams trickle in over the coming days, coaches will be balancing recovery with tactical work, mindful of the physical toll the NHL season takes. Yet despite the exhaustion, the mood around the rinks is one of anticipation.

Barcelona Officially Withdraw From European Super League Project

BARCELONA

FC Barcelona announced on Saturday that it has formally withdrawn from the controversial European Super League project, bringing an end to its participation in the breakaway competition that has divided European football since its inception.

In a statement released by the club, Barcelona confirmed it had taken official steps to sever ties with the project and its remaining stakeholders.

FC Barcelona hereby announces that today it has formally notified the European Super League Company and the clubs involved of its withdrawal from the European Super League project, the statement read.

Barcelona were one of the original founding members of the Super League when plans for the competition were unveiled in 2021, a move that sparked widespread backlash from fans, domestic leagues, UEFA, and FIFA.

While most clubs quickly pulled out following intense opposition, Barcelona had continued to support the project, citing financial pressures and the need for reform in European football's economic model.

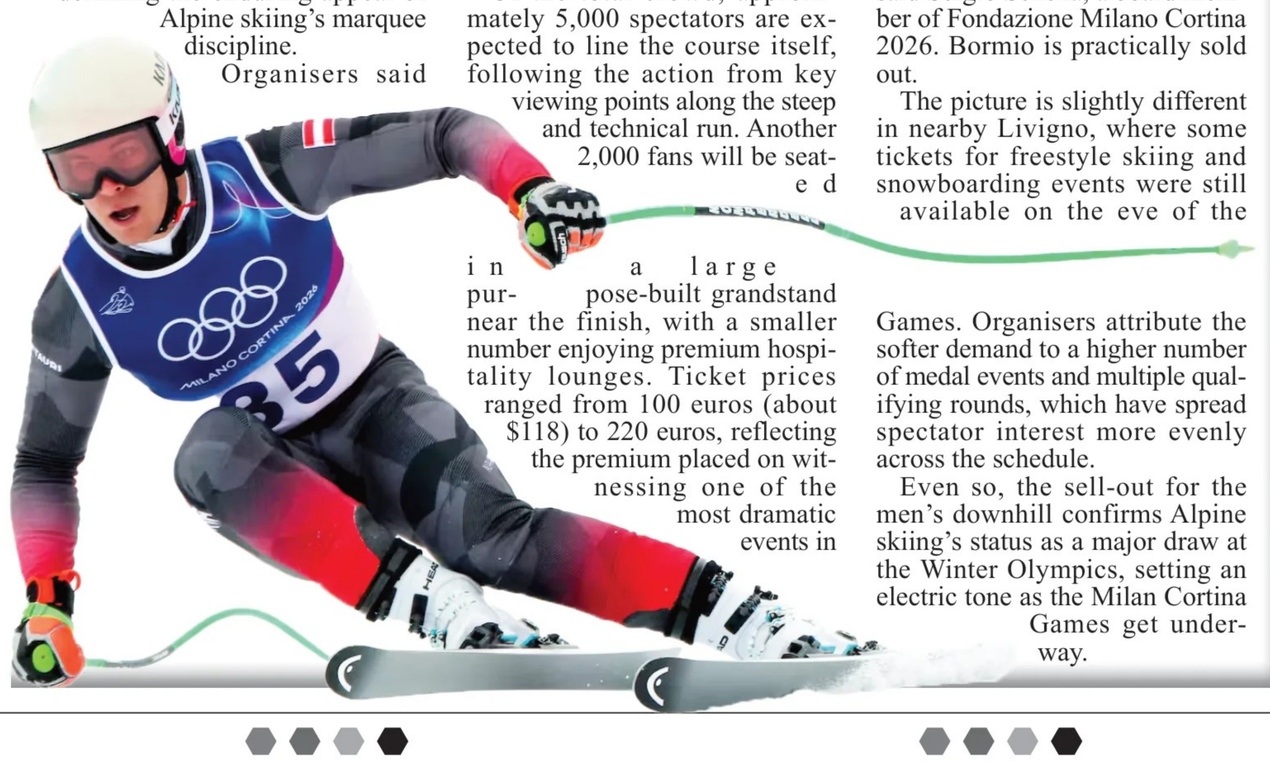
Saturday's announcement marks a significant reversal of that position.

The decision is understood to reflect changing leadership priorities within the club, as well as ongoing legal, sporting, and reputational challenges associated with the Super League. Barcelona's withdrawal further isolates the project, which has struggled to gain legitimacy or momentum following the mass exodus of founding clubs.

The move is likely to be welcomed by supporters and governing bodies alike, many of whom viewed the Super League as a threat to the traditional, merit-based structure of European football. It may also help Barcelona strengthen relations with UEFA and La Liga at a time when cooperation is critical to the club's long-term sporting and financial stability.

Sell-Out Crowd Set for Men's Downhill as Milan Cortina Games Award First Gold

BORMIO



A packed house is expected on Saturday as Alpine skiing takes centre stage at the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, with organisers confirming a sell-out crowd for the men's downhill in the Italian village of Bormio. The race will be the first event of the Games to award a gold medal, underlining the enduring appeal of Alpine skiing's marquee discipline.

Organisers said around 7,000 paying spectators will descend on the resort to watch the world's elite speed specialists hurtle down the famed Stelvio course at speeds reaching up to 150 kilometres per hour. Fans will congregate at the newly built Stelvio Ski Centre at the bottom of the course, creating a festival-like atmosphere around the finish area.

Of the total crowd, approximately 5,000 spectators are expected to line the course itself, following the action from key viewing points along the steep and technical run. Another 2,000 fans will be seated in a large purpose-built grandstand near the finish, with a smaller number enjoying premium hospitality lounges. Ticket prices ranged from 100 euros (about $118) to 220 euros, reflecting the premium placed on witnessing one of the most dramatic events in winter sport.

Demand has been strong across Bormio's Olympic programme. Organisers confirmed that other Alpine skiing races at the venue are also sold out, with only a handful of seats remaining for Monday's combined event and for the ski mountaineering competitions. Just a week ago, there were no tickets left along the course, said Sergio Schena, a board member of Fondazione Milano Cortina 2026. Bormio is practically sold out.

The picture is slightly different in nearby Livigno, where some tickets for freestyle skiing and snowboarding events were still available on the eve of the Games. Organisers attribute the softer demand to a higher number of medal events and multiple qualifying rounds, which have spread spectator interest more evenly across the schedule.

Even so, the sell-out for the men's downhill confirms Alpine skiing's status as a major draw at the Winter Olympics, setting an electric tone as the Milan Cortina Games get underway.

Gurbaz withdraws from PSL as Afghan govt refuses to give NOC

NEW DELHI

With diplomatic relations between neighbours Pakistan and Afghanistan at a low because of recent air strikes across the border, the Afghan government has refused to give NOC to its players to play in the Pakistan Super League, dealing another blow to the country's cricket establishment, a news report said on Saturday. The Afghan government has decided not to allow its players to participate in the PSL following last month's air strikes by Pakistan in Afghan strongholds across the border in December, Telecom Asia Sport said in a report. The news came on a day when dashing Afghan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz withdrew from the Pakistan Super League, a day after the Peshawar Zalmi franchise announced he was signed directly for an unknown sum of money, the report said. According to the report, the PSL has increased the salary cap of the teams to 50 crore, making it an attractive proposition for players.

Dhurandhar 2
earns crores before release through rights deals

Ranveer Singh and director Aditya Dhar's upcoming film Dhurandhar 2 has become a rare example of early success in Indian cinema. Officially titled Dhurandhar: The Revenge, the film is scheduled to release in theatres on March 19, 2026. Even before audiences buy a single ticket, the movie has already earned Rs 245 crore, making it profitable ahead of release.

This impressive amount has not come from box office collections. Instead, it has been earned by selling various rights before the film's theatrical debut. According to industry reports, the biggest share came from digital streaming rights. A leading OTT platform reportedly paid Rs 150 crore for exclusive streaming rights, showing strong confidence in the film.

In addition, satellite television rights for all languages were sold for Rs 50 crore. This allows multiple TV channels to air the film after its theatrical and digital runs. Music rights also added a major amount, bringing in Rs 45 crore. Together, these deals pushed the total earnings to Rs 245 crore.

The first Dhurandhar film from 2025 also performed well in non-theatrical business, earning Rs 140 crore from similar deals. However, the sequel has gone far beyond that figure, reflecting the franchise's growing popularity.

The makers chose March 19, 2026, as the release date to benefit from Eid and Gudi Padwa holidays. Big holidays usually bring larger crowds to cinemas. After its theatre run, the film is expected to arrive on OTT platforms in the second week of May 2026.

VTU Introduces Artificial Super Intelligence In Historic Global First

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) has taken a major step by introducing Artificial Super Intelligence, known as ASI, for the first time anywhere in the world. ASI is seen as a future technology that goes beyond today's Artificial Intelligence and is expected to play a role in coming years.

To bring this technology to students, VTU has signed an agreement with Chiac ASI, a company based in the United Kingdom. Chiac ASI is known as the world's first research institution fully focused on Artificial Super Intelligence. The company has already presented award winning research at an international conference on controlling harmful ASI behaviour using Indian sutras.

The agreement was signed by VTU Vice Chancellor Dr S Vidyashankar and Chiac ASI Chief Executive Officer Chandrashekar Nagaraju. After the signing, Dr Vidyashankar said technology is changing fast and VTU wants to move with the times. He added that ASI is expected to bring a major change by 2030 and the university wants students to be ready.

Under this partnership, Chiac ASI will offer free internships to over one thousand students. It will also provide special self updating ASI textbooks to engineering college teachers. Workshops have already been held to train lecturers in VTU affiliated colleges.

Chandrashekar Nagaraju said India must lead in super intelligence for national security reasons. He said the goal is to train one million engineers in ASI, with VTU expected to produce four hundred thousand skilled professionals. He added the agreement is meant only for learning and research, not profit.

Rajinikanth Kamal Haasan Thalaivar174 Promo Shoot To Begin Saturday

Superstar Rajinikanth continues to create excitement with his upcoming films, and fans now have another reason to celebrate. His project titled Thalaivar174, which brings him together with legendary actor Kamal Haasan, is set to begin its promo shoot this Saturday.

Rajinikanth is currently gearing up for the release of Jailer 2, directed by Nelson Dilipkumar. While that sequel is already highly awaited, news about Thalaivar174 has added to the growing buzz. The film marks a rare collaboration between two of Tamil cinema's biggest icons.

Reports say the promotional video for Thalaivar174 will be light hearted, fun, and humorous in tone. It is expected to be similar to the announcement video of Jailer 2. Director Nelson Dilipkumar and music composer Anirudh are also likely to appear in the promo, playing amusing roles as makeup artists. Though there is no official announcement yet, the project is being referred to as Thalaivar174 X KH238 within the film industry.

This is not the only project bringing Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan together. The two stars are also set to appear in another film tentatively titled Thalaivar173. This film will be directed by Cibi Chakravarthy, after director Sundar C stepped away from the project.

Earlier, Rajinikanth described Thalaivar173 as a full commercial entertainer. He said shooting would begin in April. Director Cibi Chakravarthy has promised that audiences will leave theatres feeling fully satisfied after watching the film. Fans across regions are eagerly waiting to witness the magic of this iconic pairing on-screen again

Rakkasapuradhol
OTT Release Details Revealed Ahead Of Theatrical Run

Kannada cinema fans have an intriguing thriller to look forward to with Rakkasapuradhol, starring Raj B Shetty in the lead role. Directed by debutant Ravi Saranga, the film released in theatres on February 6 and has already gained attention for securing its satellite and digital rights ahead of its theatrical run.

According to reports, Zee Network has acquired the television and OTT rights of the film. After completing its run in cinemas, Rakkasapuradhol will stream on ZEE5 and will also be available through OTTplay Premium. Such pre-release deals are uncommon in the Kannada film industry, where streaming agreements are usually finalised after box office performance.

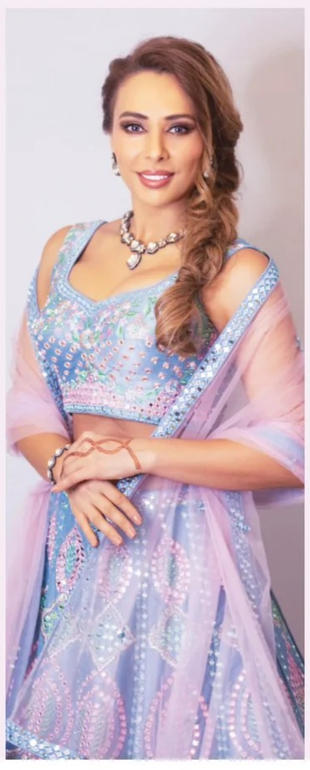
Although the makers have not announced an official streaming date, industry trends suggest the film may premiere online about a month after its theatrical release, likely in early to mid-March.

The music is composed by Arjun Janya, who recently made his directorial debut with 45, another Raj B Shetty-starrer streaming on the same platform. In the film, Raj B Shetty plays Sub-Inspector Shiva, posted to a peaceful village rocked by a series of murders. While locals blame a demon named Kolli Devva, Shiva relies on logic to uncover the truth. The cast includes Archana Kottige, Swathishta Krishnan, B Suresh, Jahangir, Siddanna, Gaurav Shetty, and Anirudh Bhat.

Iulia Vantur Thrilled To Sing With Arijit Singh In Echoes Of Us

Actress and singer Iulia Vantur has described her collaboration with renowned singer Arijit Singh on the romantic track Tere Sang as a truly special and fulfilling experience. The song is part of her upcoming short film Echoes Of Us and marks the first musical collaboration between the two artists. Iulia expressed deep gratitude that Arijit appreciated the version she initially sang and agreed to lend his voice to the song.

"I feel truly grateful that Arijit liked the song I initially sang and agreed to bless it with his beautiful voice," she said. Iulia added that being part of Arijit Singh's musical world was magical and creatively enriching. The song, filled with emotion and warmth, portrays a tender romantic space between her character and actor Deepak Tijori in the film.



Directed by Joe Rajan, Echoes Of Us marks Iulia Vantur's international acting debut. The short film also features Spanish actress Alessandra Whelan Merediz and is produced by Pooja Batra in collaboration with Alliance Media Pty Ltd. The film has already made its presence felt on the festival circuit, having been screened at the 14th Bangalore Shorts Film Festival 2025, Global Indie Filmmaker Awards 2025, Independent Shorts Awards 2025, and the Love & Hope International Film Festival 2025.

Born in Romania, Iulia began her career as a television presenter before moving into music in India. She made her Indian singing debut with Himesh Reshammiya's Every Night And Day and later lent her voice to songs in Salman Khan films such as Radhe, Sultan, and Race 3.

Speaking about her passion for acting, Iulia said she enjoys expressing herself through different art forms. She added that this role resonates strongly with her values and hopes the film connects audiences to its emotional story and the music shared with Arijit Singh.

Nani Shoots Energetic Intro Song For The Paradise Film

Natural Star Nani is busy shooting for his upcoming film The Paradise, directed by Srikanth Odela. The film has recently been in the news due to rumours about possible delays and its large budget. However, fresh reports suggest that the team is moving ahead with production.

Nani is currently filming a high energy introduction song. The song is said to present the power and attitude of his character from the very beginning. It is designed as a mass number with strong visuals and energetic moments. The makers believe this song will set the tone for the entire film.

The intro song is being shot on a grand scale with elaborate sets and a large crew. Industry sources say it could become one of the most talked about highlights of the movie. Despite delay talks, the team has begun a new shooting schedule in Hyderabad and is working to complete filming quickly.

Earlier reports suggested that the film's budget has crossed two hundred crore rupees, making it one of the biggest projects in Nani's career. A massive slum set is being built across thirty acres on the outskirts of Hyderabad. Many have started calling the project the Baahubali of slums because of its scale.

Sanya Malhotra Reflects As Mrs. Completes One Year Journey

Actor Sanya Malhotra marked one year of her film Mrs with gratitude and reflection. The film, which released on February 7, 2025, sparked strong discussion online about feminism, marriage, and the place of women in Indian society. Even a year later, audiences continue to talk about its message.

On the anniversary, Sanya thanked viewers for supporting the story of Richa, the character she played. She said the love people show for the film stays with her long after conversations end. The actor promised to keep learning and unlearning so she can represent women more honestly and responsibly on screen.

Sanya shared a video on social media showing behind the scenes moments from the shoot. Along with it, she wrote a heartfelt note expressing how deeply the film and audience reactions have affected her as a performer.

Directed by Arati Kadav, Mrs is the Hindi remake of the Malayalam film The Great Indian Kitchen. The film released directly on ZEE5 and quickly became one of the most talked about projects of the year.

Before its release, Mrs was screened at major festivals including the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne, the New York Indian Film Festival, and IFFI Goa. Sanya received a standing ovation in New York for her performance.

The story follows Richa, a married woman struggling to keep her identity while handling daily household duties. The film highlights gender roles, silent expectations, and the emotional cost of tradition. It continues inspiring conversations about equality, dignity, choice, freedom, empathy, respect everywhere.

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